

V. I. LENIN

SELECTED WORKS

VOLUME VI

**From the
Bourgeois Revolution
to the
Proletarian Revolution
(1917)**



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PREFACE

THE writings and speeches of Lenin contained in Vol. VI of the *Selected Works* relate to the period from the February Revolution, which took place in the beginning of 1917, to the victory of the proletariat and the establishment of a Soviet government in Russia towards the end of that year. Four items relating to a later date are added: "The Elections to the Constituent Assembly and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," "The Anniversary of the Revolution," "The Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution" and "Our Revolution." These items are included in order that the reader may, within the scope of the present volume, obtain a finished picture of Lenin's theory of the proletarian revolution and his views on the October Revolution.

It was not always possible to include the more voluminous writings of Lenin relating to the period covered by the present volume, and they are accordingly replaced by smaller and more popular writings (for instance, the long article entitled "The Threatening Catastrophe and How to Fight It" is replaced by the comparatively short article entitled "The Aims of the Revolution"). An extremely important work of Lenin's "The State and Revolution," written in 1917 and published in 1918, is entirely omitted in this volume. In view of its close connection with Lenin's later writings on the subject of the state, bourgeois democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat, it will be included in Vol. VII of the *Selected Works*.

Publisher's Note. 1944

The present volume is a reprint of the edition published in 1936 with a few textual emendations taken from revised translations. The explanatory notes have been omitted. Readers will find it helpful to refer to the *History of the C.P.S.U. (B)* and to use its index.

LETTERS FROM AFAR

FIRST LETTER

The First Stage of the First Revolution

THE first revolution engendered by the imperialist World War has broken out. This first revolution will assuredly not be the last.

To judge by the scanty information at the writer's disposal here in Switzerland, the first stage of this first revolution, the Russian revolution of March 14 (1),¹ 1917, is at an end. This first stage of our revolution will certainly not be the last.

How could this "miracle" have happened, that in a period of not more than eight days—the period mentioned by M. Milyukov in his boastful telegram to Russia's representatives abroad—there should have collapsed a monarchy that had maintained itself for centuries, and that in spite of everything managed to maintain itself throughout the tremendous national class conflicts of the three years 1905-07?

There are no miracles in nature and history. But every abrupt turn in history, and this applies to every revolution, presents such a wealth of material, unfolds such unexpected and specific combinations of the forms of struggle and the alignment of forces of the contestants, that to the lay mind there is much that must appear miraculous.

For the tsarist monarchy to have collapsed in a few days required the combination of a number of factors of world-historic importance. We shall mention the chief of them.

Without the tremendous class conflicts and without the revolutionary energy displayed by the Russian proletariat during the three years 1905-07, this second revolution could not possibly have

¹ The dates are given according to New Style, those in parenthesis being the corresponding Old Style dates.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

Cadet Russia of the bourgeoisie and landlords, behind whom the petty bourgeoisie trailed; 3) the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which is seeking allies in the proletariat and the poor masses of the population—these three *fundamental* political forces became fully and clearly revealed even in the eight days of the "first stage" and even to an observer so remote from the scene of events and obliged to content himself with the meagre dispatches of foreign newspapers as the present writer.

But, before speaking of this in greater detail, I must return to that portion of my letter which is devoted to a factor of prime importance, namely, the imperialist World War. The belligerent powers, the belligerent groups of capitalists, of the "bosses" of the capitalist system, the slaveowners of the capitalist slave-system, are shackled by the war to each other with *chains of iron*. *One bloody clot*—that is the social and political life of the present period of history.

The Socialists who deserted to the side of the bourgeoisie upon the outbreak of the war, the Davids and Scheidemanns in Germany and the Plekhanovs, Potresovs, Gvozdevs in Russia, clamoured loud and long against the "illusions" of the revolutionaries, against the "illusions" of the Basle Manifesto,¹ against the "dream-farce" of transforming the imperialist war into a civil war. They went through the whole gamut of praises to the strength, tenacity and adaptability allegedly revealed by capitalism—they, who had aided the capitalists to "adapt," tame, fool and disunite the working classes of the various countries!

But "he who laughs last laughs best." The bourgeoisie have been unable to delay for long the revolutionary crisis engendered by the war. The crisis is maturing with irresistible force in every country, beginning with Germany, which, according to an observer who recently visited that country, is suffering "brilliantly organised starvation," and ending with England and France, where *starvation is also looming*, but where organisation is far less "brilliant."

¹ Regarding the Basle Manifesto, cf. Lenin's article "The Collapse of the Second International," Vol. V of the present edition.—*Ed.*

It was only natural that the revolutionary crisis should have broken out *first* in tsarist Russia, where disorganisation was most monstrous and the proletariat most revolutionary (not by virtue of any specific qualities, but because of the vivid traditions of 1905). Here the crisis was hastened by the series of severe defeats suffered by Russia and her allies. These defeats entirely disjointed the old machinery of government and the old order and roused against them the anger of *all* classes of the population; they incensed the army, wiped out a vast number of its old diehard-noble and rotten-bureaucratic commanding staff, and replaced it by a young, fresh commanding staff consisting principally of bourgeois and petty bourgeois.

But while the defeats in the war were a negative factor hastening the outbreak of the crisis, the connection of Anglo-French finance capital, of Anglo-French imperialism, with the Octobrist and Constitutional-Democratic capital of Russia was a factor that speeded the crisis.

This highly important aspect of the situation is, for obvious reasons, not mentioned by the Anglo-French press, but is maliciously emphasised by the Germans. We Marxists must face the truth soberly, and not allow ourselves to be confused either by the official lies, the sugary diplomatic and ministerial lies of the first group of imperialist belligerents, or by the sniggering and smirking of its financial and military rivals of the other belligerent group. The whole course of events in the February-March Revolution clearly shows that the British and French embassies with their agents and "connections," who had long been making desperate efforts to prevent "separate" agreements and a separate peace between Nicholas II (who, let us hope and endeavour, will be the last) and Wilhelm II, directly strove to *replace* Nicholas Romanov.

Let us harbour no illusions.

The fact that the revolution succeeded so quickly and—at the first superficial glance—so "radically" is due to the fact that, as a result of a unique historical situation, absolutely dissimilar movements, absolutely heterogeneous class interests, absolutely contrary political and social tendencies have *merged*, and merged in

Cadet Russia of the bourgeoisie and landlords, behind whom the petty bourgeoisie trailed; 3) the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which is seeking allies in the proletariat and the poor masses of the population—these three *fundamental* political forces became fully and clearly revealed even in the eight days of the "first stage" and even to an observer so remote from the scene of events and obliged to content himself with the meagre dispatches of foreign newspapers as the present writer.

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a strikingly "harmonious" manner. There was the conspiracy of the Anglo-French imperialists, who impelled Milyukov, Guchkov and Co. to seize power *for the purpose of continuing the imperialist war*, for the purpose of conducting the war still more ferociously and obstinately, for the purpose of *slaughtering fresh millions* of Russian workers and peasants in order that the Guchkovs might obtain Constantinople, the French capitalists Syria, the British capitalists Mesopotamia, and so on. This on the one hand. On the other, there was a profound proletarian and mass popular movement of a revolutionary character (a movement of the entire poor population of town and country) for *bread, for peace, for real freedom*.

The revolutionary workers and soldiers have destroyed the infamous tsarist monarchy root and branch, neither elated nor embarrassed by the fact that at certain brief and exceptional historical junctures they were aided by the efforts of Buchanan,¹ Guchkov, Milyukov and Co., whose desire was simply *to replace one monarch by another*.

This was the true state of affairs. And this alone must be the view of a politician who does not fear the truth, who soberly weighs the balance of social forces in the revolution, who appraises every "given moment" not only from the point of view of its present, current peculiarities, but also from the point of view of the deeper-lying springs, the deeper interrelation of the interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, both in Russia and throughout the world.

The workers and soldiers of Petrograd, like the workers and soldiers of the whole of Russia, self-sacrificingly fought the tsarist monarchy—for freedom, land for the peasants, and *peace* as against the imperialist slaughter. Anglo-French imperialist capital, in order to continue and intensify that slaughter, hatched court intrigues, conspired, incited and encouraged the Guchkovs and Milyukovs, and prepared to install *a new, ready-made government*, which *did* in fact seize power after the proletarian struggle had struck the first blows at tsarism.

¹ The British ambassador to Russia.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

This government is not a fortuitous assemblage of persons.

They are the representatives of the new class that has risen to political power in Russia, the class of the capitalist landlords and the bourgeoisie, the class that for a long time *has been ruling* our country economically, and that during the Revolution of 1905-07, during the counter-revolutionary period of 1907-14, and especially during the period of the war of 1914-17, organised itself politically with extreme rapidity, taking into its hands the control of the local government bodies, of popular education, of conventions of every type, of the Duma, the War Industries Committees, etc. This new class was already "nearly" in power in 1917, and therefore the first blows dealt at tsarism were sufficient to bring the latter to the ground and clear the way for the bourgeoisie. The imperialist war, which required an incredible exertion of energy, so accelerated the course of development of backward Russia that we have "at a single stroke" (or rather as it *seemed*, at a single stroke) caught up with Italy, England, and almost with France; we have obtained a "coalition," a "national" (i.e., adapted for carrying on the imperialist slaughter and for deceiving the people), a "parliamentary" government.

Side by side with this government, which as regards the present war is but the clerk of the billion-dollar "firm," England and France, there has arisen a new, unofficial, undeveloped and as yet comparatively weak *workers' government*, expressing the interests of the workers and of the poor section of the urban and rural population. This is the *Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies* in Petrograd.

Such is the *actual* political situation; and we must first endeavour to define it with the greatest possible objective precision, in order that Marxist tactics may be based upon a solid foundation, the only foundation upon which they can be based—the foundation of *facts*.

The tsarist monarchy has been smashed, but not finally destroyed.

The Octobrist-Cadet bourgeois government, which desires to fight the imperialist war "to a finish," is in reality the agent of the financial firm "England and France." It is *obliged* to promise

the people the *maximum* of liberties and sops compatible with the maintenance of its power over the people and the possibility of continuing the imperialist slaughter.

The Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies is the embryo of a workers' government, the representative of the interests of the *poor* masses of the population, *i.e.*, of nine-tenths of the population, and is striving for *peace, bread and freedom*.

The conflict of these three forces determines the situation as it exists at present, which is *transitional* from the first phase of the revolution to the second.

In order to conduct a real struggle against the tsarist monarchy and in order that freedom may be guaranteed in deed, and not merely in words, not merely in the promises of glib liberalism, it is necessary, not that the workers should support the new government, but that the government should "support" the workers! For the only *guarantee* of liberty and of the complete destruction of tsarism *lies in arming the proletariat*, in strengthening, extending and developing the role, significance, and power of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

All the rest is mere phrases and lies, self-deception on the part of the politicians of the liberal and radical camp.

Help, or, at least, do not hinder the arming of the workers, and liberty in Russia will be invincible, the monarchy irrestorable, the republic secure.

Otherwise the people will have been fooled. Promises are cheap, promises cost nothing. It was with promises that every bourgeois politician in every bourgeois revolution fed the people and fooled the workers.

Our revolution is a bourgeois revolution and therefore the workers must support the bourgeoisie, declared the worthless politicians in the camp of the liquidators.

Our revolution is a bourgeois revolution, we Marxists declare; and therefore the workers must open the eyes of the people to the deception being practised by the bourgeois politicians; they must teach them not to trust in words, but to depend entirely on their *own* strength, on their own organisation, on their own unity, and on their own weapons.

The government of the Octobrists and Cadets, of the Guchkovs and Milyukovs could not give *peace, bread and freedom*, even if it sincerely desired.

It cannot give peace because it is a war government, a government for the continuation of the imperialist slaughter, a government of *conquest*, which so far has not uttered a single word in renunciation of the tsarist policy of seizing Armenia, Galicia, Turkey, of annexing Constantinople, of reconquering Poland, Courland, Livonia, etc. This government is bound hand and foot by Anglo-French imperialist capital. Russian capital is merely one branch of the world-wide "firm" which manipulates hundreds of billions of rubles and which is known as "England and France."

It cannot give bread because it is a bourgeois government. *At best*, it can give the people a "brilliantly organised starvation," as Germany did. But the people will not tolerate starvation. The people will learn, and probably very soon, that bread exists and can be obtained, *but only by methods that do not respect the sanctity of capital and landownership.*

It cannot give freedom because it is a government of landlords and capitalists, and *fears* the people.

We shall speak in another article of the tactical problems of our immediate attitude towards this government. We shall there point out the peculiarity of the present situation, which is a *transition* from the first stage of the revolution to the second, and we shall point out why the slogan, the "order of the day," at the present moment must be: *Workers, you have displayed marvels of proletarian heroism, the heroism of the people, in the civil war against tsarism; you must display marvels of organisation, organisation of the proletariat and the people, in order to prepare for victory in the second stage of the revolution.*

Confining ourselves for the present to an analysis of the class struggle and the interrelation of class forces at this stage of the revolution, we must ask: Who are the *allies* of the proletariat in this revolution?

It has *two* allies: first, the broad mass of the semi-proletarian, and partly also of the petty peasant population of Russia, who number scores of millions and constitute the overwhelming ma-

jority of the population. For this great mass peace, bread, freedom and land are *essential*. It is inevitable that this mass will to a certain extent be under the influence of the bourgeoisie, particularly of the petty bourgeoisie, to which it is most akin in its condition of life, vacillating between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The cruel lessons of the war, which will be the more cruel the more vigorously the war is prosecuted by Guchkov, Lvov, Milyukov and Co., will inevitably urge this mass towards the proletariat, compel it to follow the proletariat. We must now take advantage of the freedom given by the new regime and of the existence of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies to strive first of all to *enlighten and organise* this mass. Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, Soviets of Agricultural Workers—that is one of our most urgent tasks. In this connection our endeavour will be not only that the agricultural workers shall establish their own Soviets, but that the poor and propertyless peasants shall organise *separately* from the well-to-do peasants. The special tasks and special forms of organisation urgently needed at the present time will be dealt with in the next letter.

The second ally of the Russian proletariat is the proletariat of *all* the belligerent countries and of all countries in general. At present this ally is to a large degree repressed by the war; and the social-chauvinists in Europe who, like Plekhanov, Gvozdev and Potresov in Russia, have deserted to the bourgeoisie speak all too frequently in its name. But the liberation of the proletariat from their influence has progressed with every month of the imperialist war, and it is *inevitable* that the Russian revolution will immensely accelerate this process.

With these two allies, the proletariat of Russia, *utilising the peculiarities of the present transition moment*, can and will proceed, first, to achieve a democratic republic and the complete victory of the peasantry over the landlords, and then to *socialism*, which alone can give the war-weary peoples *peace, bread and freedom*.

March 20 (7), 1917

FAREWELL LETTER TO THE SWISS WORKERS

COMRADES SWISS WORKERS,

Leaving Switzerland for Russia, in order to continue internationalist revolutionary work in our own country, we members of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party united under the Central Committee (in distinction from another party bearing the same name but united under the Organisation Committee¹), wish to convey to you our fraternal greetings and expression of profound comradely gratitude for your comradely attitude to political emigrants.

While the *avowed* social-patriots and opportunists, the Swiss "Gruetlians," who, like the social-patriots of all countries, have deserted the camp of the proletariat for the camp of the bourgeoisie—while these people have *openly* called upon you to resist the pernicious influence of foreigners upon the Swiss labour movement; and while the *disguised* social-patriots and opportunists, who form the majority of the leaders of the Swiss Socialist Party, have been *covertly* pursuing a similar policy, we must declare that we have met with warm sympathy from the revolutionary Socialist workers of Switzerland, who hold internationalist views, and have derived much benefit from our comradely intercourse with them.

We have always been particularly careful in expressing our opinion on questions concerning the Swiss movement, acquaintance with which requires prolonged participation in the local movement. But those of us, not more than ten or fifteen in number, who were members of the Swiss Socialist Party regarded it as our duty steadfastly to assert our point of view, i.e., the point of view of the "Zimmerwald Left," on general and fundamental questions per-

¹ By another party bearing the same name is meant the Menshevik Party; the Organisation Committee was in fact its Central Committee.—Ed.

taining to the international Socialist movement and to offer vigorous resistance not only to the social-patriots but also to the line of the so-called "Centre," which includes R. Grimm, F. Schneider, Jacques Schmidt, and others in Switzerland; Kautsky, Haase and the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* in Germany; Longuet, Pressemane, and others in France; Snowden, Ramsay MacDonald and others in England; Turati, Treves and their friends in Italy; and the above-mentioned party headed by the "Organisation Committee" (Axelrod, Martov, Chkheidze, Skobelev, and others) in Russia.

We worked hand in hand with the revolutionary Social-Democrats of Switzerland, partly grouped around *Freie Jugend*,¹ who formulated and circulated (in German and French) the motives for holding a referendum on the question of summoning a Party congress in April 1917, to take up the question of the Party's attitude towards the war; who at the convention of the Zurich Canton in Töss introduced the resolution of the youth and the "Lefts" on the question of the war; who in March 1917 issued and circulated in certain parts of French Switzerland a leaflet in German and French entitled *Our Terms of Peace*, etc.

We send our fraternal greetings to these comrades, with whom we worked hand in hand and shared a common point of view.

We had not, and have not, the slightest doubt that the imperialist government of England will under no circumstances permit the return to Russia of Russian internationalists who are irreconcilably opposed to the imperialist government of Guchkov-Milyukov and Co., and who are irreconcilably opposed to Russia's continuing the imperialist war.

In this connection we must say a few words regarding our understanding of the tasks of the Russian revolution. We deem this all the more necessary since, through the medium of the Swiss workers, we can and should address the German, French, and Italian workers, who speak the same languages as the population of Switzerland, which still enjoys the advantages of peace and of the greatest relative amount of political freedom.

¹ *Free Youth*—a magazine of the Socialist youth of Switzerland.—Ed.

We remain absolutely loyal to the declaration we made in the central organ of our Party, in No. 47 of *Sotsial-Demokrat* of October 26 (13), 1915,¹ published in Geneva. We there stated that should the revolution prove victorious in Russia, and a *republican* government come to power, a government desirous of continuing the *imperialist* war, a war in league with the imperialist bourgeoisie of England and France, a war for the seizure of Constantinople, Armenia, Galicia, etc., etc., we would resolutely oppose such a government, we would oppose "national defence" in such a war.

A contingency more or less of this kind has arisen. The new government of Russia, which conducted negotiations with the brother of Nicholas II for the restoration of the monarchy in Russia, and in which the important and key posts are occupied by the *monarchists* Lvov and Guchkov, is trying to deceive the Russian workers by means of the slogan "The Germans must overthrow Wilhelm" (correct, but why not add that the British, the Italians, etc., must do the same to their kings, and the Russians to their monarchists, Lvov and Guchkov?). With the help of this slogan and without publishing the imperialist predatory treaties concluded by the tsar with France, Great Britain, etc., and *confirmed by the government of Guchkov-Milyukov-Kerensky*, this government is trying to represent its *imperialist* war with Germany as a war of "defence" (i.e., as a just war, legitimate even from the point of view of the proletariat)—is trying to palm off a war on behalf of the piratical, imperialist, predatory aims of Russian, British and other capital as a "defence" of the Russian republic (which does not yet exist in Russia, and which the Lvovs and the Guchkovs *have not even promised* to establish).

If there is any truth in the latest telegraphic reports to the effect that the avowed Russian social-patriots (such as Plekhanov, Zasulich, Potresov, and others) have effected something like a rapprochement with the party of the "Centre," the party of the "Organisation Committee," the party of Chkheidze, Skobelev, etc., on the basis of the slogan "As long as the Germans do not overthrow Wilhelm, our war is a defensive war"—if this is true, then

¹ See Lenin, "A Few Theses," *Selected Works*, Vol. V.—Ed.

we shall redouble our energies in the fight against the party of Chkheidze, Skobelev, etc., a fight which we have always waged against this party *in the past* for its opportunist, vacillating, unstable political behaviour.

Our slogan is—No support to the Guchkov-Milyukov government! Whoever says that such support is necessary in order to prevent the restoration of tsarism is deceiving the people. On the contrary, the Guchkov government has *already* conducted negotiations for the restoration of the monarchy in Russia. The arming and the organisation of the proletariat *alone can prevent* Guchkov and Co. from *restoring* the monarchy in Russia. Only the revolutionary proletariat of Russia and of the whole of Europe, which remains loyal to internationalism, can save humanity from the horrors of the imperialist war!

We do not close our eyes to the tremendous difficulties that face the internationalist revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat of Russia. In times like these sudden and swift changes are possible. In No. 47 of *Sotsial-Demokrat* we gave a clear and direct answer to the natural question: What would our Party do if the revolution placed it in power *at this moment*? Our answer was: 1) We would forthwith propose peace to *all* the belligerent peoples; 2) We would announce our conditions of peace as being the immediate liberation of *all* colonies and *all* oppressed and non-sovereign peoples; 3) We would immediately begin and carry to its completion the liberation of all the peoples oppressed by the Great-Russians; 4) We do not deceive ourselves for one moment that such conditions would be unacceptable not only to the monarchist but also to the republican bourgeoisie of Germany, *and not only* to Germany, but also to the capitalist governments of England and France.

We would be forced to wage a revolutionary war against the German bourgeoisie, and not the German bourgeoisie alone. *And we would wage this war.* We are not pacifists. We are opposed to imperialist wars for the division of spoils among the capitalists, but we have always declared it to be absurd for the revolutionary proletariat to renounce revolutionary wars that *may prove necessary in the interests of socialism.*

The task we outlined in No. 47 of *Sotsial-Demokrat* is a gigantic one. It can be effected only by a long series of great class battles between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. It was not our impatience, nor our desire, but *the objective conditions* created by the imperialist war that brought the whole of humanity to an impasse, and faced it with the dilemma of either permitting the extermination of more millions of lives and the complete extinction of European civilisation, or handing over the power to the revolutionary proletariat and achieving the socialist revolution in *all* civilised countries.

To the Russian proletariat has fallen the great honour of *initiating* the series of revolutions which are arising from the imperialist war with objective inevitability. But the idea that the Russian proletariat is a chosen revolutionary proletariat among the workers of the world is absolutely alien to us. We know full well that the proletariat of Russia is *less* organised, less prepared, and less class conscious than the proletariat of other countries. It is not any particular virtues it possessed, but rather the specific historical circumstances, that have made the proletariat of Russia for a certain, *perhaps very brief*, period the skirmishers of the world revolutionary proletariat.

Russia is a peasant country, one of the most backward of European countries. Socialism *cannot triumph there directly at once*. But the peasant character of the country, coupled with the vast land possessions of the noble landlords, *may*, to judge by the experience of 1905, give tremendous scope to the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia, and make our revolution a *prelude* to and a *step* towards the world socialist revolution.

It is in the struggle for these ideas, which have been fully confirmed by the experience of 1905 and the spring of 1917, that our Party was formed and waged an implacable fight against all other parties. For these ideas we shall continue to fight.

Socialism cannot triumph directly and immediately in Russia. But the peasant masses *may* carry the inevitable and already mature agrarian revolution to the point of *confiscating* the immense estates of the landlords. This has always been our slogan, and it

is now being advocated in Petrograd by the Central Committee of our Party, as well as by our Party newspaper, *Pravda*. The proletariat will fight for this slogan, while not closing its eyes to the inevitability of obdurate class conflicts between the agricultural wage workers and the impoverished peasants closely associated with them, on the one hand, and the prosperous peasants, whose position was strengthened by the Stolypin agrarian "reform" (1907-14), on the other. One must not forget that 104 peasant deputies in the First (1906) and Second (1907) Dumas proposed a revolutionary agrarian bill demanding the nationalisation of all lands and their disposal through local committees elected on a completely democratic basis.

Such a revolution would not in itself be a socialist revolution. But it would give a great impetus to the world labour movement. It would greatly strengthen the position of the socialist proletariat in Russia and its influence on the agricultural workers and the poor peasants. It would, on the strength of this influence, enable the urban proletariat to develop such revolutionary organisations as the "Soviets of Workers' Deputies," to substitute them for the old instruments of oppression of the bourgeois states, the army, the police and the bureaucracy, and to effect, under the pressure of the intolerable burden of the imperialist war and its consequences, a series of revolutionary measures establishing control over the production and distribution of goods.

The Russian proletariat single-handed cannot successfully *complete* the socialist revolution. But it can lend such a sweep to the Russian revolution as would create the most favourable conditions for a socialist revolution, and, in a sense, *start that revolution*. It can render more favourable the conditions under which its *most important*, most trustworthy and most reliable coadjutor, the *European* and the *American socialist* proletariat, will undertake its decisive battles.

Let those of little faith despair on account of the temporary triumph enjoyed within the European Socialist movement by such abhorrent lackeys of the imperialist bourgeoisie as the Scheide-

manns, the Legiens, the Davids, etc., in Germany; Sembat, Guesde, Renaudel and Co. in France, and the Fabians and the Labourites in England. We are firmly convinced that this dirty froth on the surface of the world labour movement will be quickly swept away by the tide of revolution.

In Germany we are already witnessing the *seething unrest* of the proletarian masses, who have contributed so much to humanity and Socialism by their stubborn, unyielding and sustained organisational work during the many decades of European "calm"—1871 to 1914. The future of German Socialism is represented not by the traitors Scheidemann, Legien, David and Co., nor by the vacillating and spineless politicians, Haase, Kautsky and their like, who have been crushed by the routine of the "peaceful" period.

The future belongs to the current that gave us Karl Liebknecht, that created the Spartacus Group and carried on its propaganda in the Bremen *Arbeiterpolitik*.

The objective conditions of the imperialist war make it certain that the revolution will not be limited to the *first stage* of the Russian revolution, that the revolution will *not* be limited to Russia.

The German proletariat is the most trustworthy and the most reliable ally of the Russian and the world proletarian revolution.

When in November 1914 our Party put forward the slogan "Turn the imperialist war into a civil war" of the oppressed against the oppressors for the achievement of socialism, this slogan met with the hostility and malicious ridicule of the social-patriots and with the incredulous, sceptical, spineless, temporising silence of the Social-Democratic "Centre." David, the German social-chauvinist and social-imperialist, called it "insane," while Mr. Plekhanov, the representative of Russian (and Anglo-French) social-chauvinism, i.e., socialism in words and imperialism in deeds, called it "a dream-farce" (*Mittelding zwischen Traum und Komödie*¹). The representatives of the "Centre" preferred to say nothing, or indulged in puerile witticisms regarding this "straight line drawn in empty space."

¹ Something between a dream and a comedy.—Ed.

Now, after March 1917, one must be blind not to see that this slogan is the right one. The transformation of the imperialist war into civil war is *becoming* a fact.

Long live the proletarian revolution *which is beginning* in Europe!

On behalf of the comrades leaving Switzerland, members of the R.S.D.L.P. (united under the Central Committee), who approved this letter at a meeting held on April 8, 1917,

N. LENIN

April 8 (March 26), 1917

THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN THE PRESENT REVOLUTION

I ARRIVED in Petrograd on the night of April 16 (3) and I could therefore, of course, deliver a report at a meeting on April 17 (4) on the tasks of the revolutionary proletariat only upon my own responsibility, and with reservations as to insufficient preparation.

The only thing I could do to facilitate matters for myself and for *honest* opponents was to prepare *written* theses. I read them, and gave the text to Comrade Tseretelli. I read them very slowly, *twice*: first at a meeting of Bolsheviks, then at a meeting of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.

I publish these personal theses with only the briefest explanatory comments. The comments were developed in far greater detail in the report.

THESES

1) In our attitude towards the war not the slightest concession must be made to "revolutionary defencism," for even under the new government of Lvov and Co. the war on Russia's part unquestionably remains a predatory imperialist war owing to the capitalist nature of that government.

The class conscious proletariat can consent to a revolutionary war, which would really justify revolutionary defencism, only on condition: a) that the power of government pass to the proletariat and the poor sections of the peasantry bordering on the proletariat; b) that all annexations be renounced in deed as well as in words; c) that a complete and real^{*} break be made with all capitalist interests.

In view of the undoubted honesty of the mass of the rank-and-file believers in revolutionary defencism, who accept the war as

a necessity only and not as a means of conquest; in view of the fact that they are being deceived by the bourgeoisie, it is necessary thoroughly, persistently and patiently to explain their error to them, to explain the indissoluble connection between capital and the imperialist war, and to prove that *it is impossible* to end the war by a truly democratic, non-coercive peace without the overthrow of capital.

The widespread propaganda of this view among the army on active service must be organised.

Fraternisation.

2) The specific feature of the present situation in Russia is that it represents a *transition* from the first stage of the revolution—which, owing to the insufficient class consciousness and organisation of the proletariat, led to the assumption of power by the bourgeoisie—to the *second stage*, which must place power in the hands of the proletariat and the poor strata of the peasantry.

This transition is characterised, on the one hand, by a maximum of freedom (Russia is *now* the freest of all the belligerent countries in the world); on the other, by the absence of violence in relation to the masses, and, finally, by the naive confidence of the masses in the government of capitalists, the worst enemies of peace and socialism.

This specific situation demands on our part an ability to adapt ourselves to the specific requirements of Party work among unprecedentedly large masses of proletarians who have just awakened to political life.

3) No support must be given to the Provisional Government; the utter falsity of all its promises must be exposed, particularly of those relating to the renunciation of annexations. Exposure, and not the unpardonable illusion-breeding “demand” that this government, a government of capitalists, should *cease* to be an imperialist government.

4) The fact must be recognised that in most of the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies our Party is in a minority, and so far in a small minority, as against a *bloc of all* the petty-bourgeois opportunist elements, who have yielded to the influence of the bourgeoisie and are the conveyors of its influence to the proletariat, from the

Narodni-Socialists¹ and the Socialist-Revolutionaries down to the Organisation Committee (Chkheidze, Tseretelli, etc.), Steklov, etc., etc.

It must be explained to the masses that the Soviet of Workers' Deputies is the *only possible* form of revolutionary government and that therefore our task is, as long as *this* government submits to the influence of the bourgeoisie, to present a patient, systematic, and persistent *explanation* of its errors and tactics, an explanation especially adapted to the practical needs of the masses.

As long as we are in the minority we carry on the work of criticising and exposing errors and at the same time advocate the necessity of transferring the entire power of state to the Soviets of Workers' Deputies, so that the masses may by experience overcome their mistakes.

5) Not a parliamentary republic—to return to a parliamentary republic from the Soviets of Workers' Deputies would be a retrograde step—but a republic of Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies throughout the country, from top to bottom.

Abolition of the police, the army² and the bureaucracy.

The salaries of all officials, who are to be elected and be subject to recall at any time, not to exceed the average wage of a competent worker.

6) The agrarian programme must be centred around the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies.

Confiscation of all landed estates.

Nationalisation of *all* lands in the country, the disposal of such lands to be in the charge of the local Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies. The organisation of separate Soviets of Deputies of the Poor Peasants. The creation of model farms on each of the large estates (varying from 100 to 300 dessiatins,³ in accordance with local and other conditions, at the

¹ The Narodni-Socialist Party occupied a position midway between the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Constitutional-Democrats.—*Ed.*

² *I.e.*, the standing army to be replaced by the universally armed people.

³ Dessiatin—2.7 acres.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

discretion of the local institutions) under the control of the Agricultural Labourers' Deputies and for the public account.

7) The immediate amalgamation of all banks in the country into a single national bank, control over which shall be exercised by the Soviet of Workers' Deputies.

8) Our *immediate* task shall be not the "introduction of socialism," but to bring social production and distribution of products at once only under the *control* of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies.

9) Party tasks:

a) Immediate summoning of a Party congress.

b) Alteration of the Party programme, mainly:

1. On the question of imperialism and the imperialist war;

2. On the question of our attitude towards the state and our demand for a "commune state."¹

3. Amendment of our antiquated minimum programme;

c) A new name for the Party.²

10) A new International.

We must take the initiative in creating a revolutionary International, an International directed against the *social-chauvinists* and against the "Centre."³

In order that the reader may understand what induced me to emphasise as a rare exception the "case" of honest opponents, I would ask him to compare the above theses with the following objection of Mr. Goldenberg: "Lenin," he said, "has planted the banner of civil war in the midst of revolutionary democracy" (quoted in No. 5 of Mr. Plekhanov's *Yedinstvo*).

A gem, is it not?

¹ I.e., a state after the model of the Paris Commune.

² Instead of "Social-Democrats," whose official leaders throughout the world have betrayed socialism by deserting to the bourgeoisie (the "defencists" and the vacillating "Kautskians"), we must call ourselves a *Communist Party*.

³ The "Centre" in the international Social-Democratic movement is the tendency which vacillates between the chauvinists ("defencists") and internationalists, i.e., Kautsky and Co. in Germany, Longuet and Co. in France, Chkheidze and Co. in Russia, Turati and Co. in Italy, MacDonald and Co. in England, etc.

I write, announce and elaborately explain: "In view of the undoubted honesty of *the mass of the rank-and-file* believers in revolutionary defencism . . . in view of the fact that they are being deceived by the bourgeoisie, it is necessary thoroughly, persistently and patiently to explain their error to them."

But the bourgeois gentlemen who call themselves Social-Democrats, who *do not* belong either to the broad masses or to the rank-and-file believers in defencism, have the effrontery to present my views thus: "The banner [!] of civil war [of which there is not a word in the theses and not a word in my speech!] has been planted [!] in the midst [!!] of revolutionary democracy. . . ."

What does this mean? In what way does this differ from pogrom agitation, from *Russkaya Volya*?

I write, announce and elaborately explain: "The Soviet of Workers' Deputies is the *only possible* form of revolutionary government, and therefore our task is . . . to present a patient, systematic, and persistent *explanation* of its errors and tactics, an explanation especially adapted to the practical needs of the masses."

But opponents of a certain type present my views as a call to "civil war in the midst of revolutionary democracy"!

I attacked the Provisional Government because it has not appointed an early date, or any date at all, for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly and because it is confining itself to vague promises. I argued that without the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies the convocation of the Constituent Assembly is not guaranteed and its success is impossible.

And the view is attributed to me that I am opposed to the speedy convocation of the Constituent Assembly!!!

I would call this "raving," had not long years of political struggle taught me to regard honesty in opponents as a rare exception.

Mr. Plekhanov in his paper called my speech "raving." Very good, Mr. Plekhanov! But how awkward, uncouth, and slow-witted you are in your polemics! If I delivered a raving speech for two whole hours, how is it that an audience of hundreds toler-

ated those ravings? Further, why does your paper devote a whole column to an account of my "ravings"? Clumsy, very clumsy!

It is, of course, much easier to shout, scold, and protest than to attempt to recall, to relate, and to explain what Marx and Engels said in 1871, 1872 and 1875 of the experience of the Paris Commune and of the *kind* of state the proletariat needs.

Mr. Plekhanov, the former Marxist, presumably does not care to recall Marxism.

I quoted the words of Rosa Luxemburg, who, on August 4, 1914, called *German* Social-Democracy a "stinking corpse." And Messrs. Plekhanov, Goldenberg and Co. are "offended." On whose account? On account of the *German* chauvinists, because they were called chauvinists!

They have got into a tangle, these poor Russian social-chauvinists—Socialists in word, and chauvinists in deed.

April 20 (7), 1917

A DUAL POWER

THE basic question in any revolution is that of state power. Unless this question is understood, there can be no intelligent participation in the revolution, let alone guidance of the revolution.

The striking feature of our revolution is that it has established a *dual power*. This fact must be grasped first and foremost. Unless it is understood, we cannot advance. We must know, for instance, how to supplement and amend our old Bolshevik "formulas," for, as it proved, they were sound in general, but their concrete realisation turned out to be different. *Nobody* hitherto thought, or could have thought, of dual power.

In what does this dual power consist? In the fact that side by side with the Provisional Government, the government of the *bourgeoisie*, there has developed *another* government, weak and embryonic as yet, but undoubtedly an actually existing and growing government—the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

What is the class composition of this other government? It consists of the proletariat and the peasantry (clad in army uniform). What is the political nature of this government? It is a revolutionary dictatorship, *i.e.*, a power based on outright revolutionary seizure, on the direct initiative of the masses from below, and not on a *law* made by a centralised government. It is an entirely different power from that of the ordinary type of parliamentary bourgeois-democratic republic which has hitherto prevailed in the advanced countries of Europe and America. This circumstance is often forgotten, often not reflected on, yet it is the crux of the matter. This power is of exactly *the same type* as the Paris Commune of 1871. Its fundamental characteristics are: 1) The source of power is not a law previously discussed and passed by parliament, but the direct initiative of the masses

from below, in their localities—outright “seizure,” to use a popular expression; 2) The direct arming of the whole people in place of the police and the army, which are institutions separated from the people and opposed to the people; order in the state under such a power is maintained by the armed workers and peasants themselves, by the armed people itself; 3) Officials and bureaucrats are either displaced by the direct rule of the people or at least placed under special control; they not only become elected officials, but are also *subject to recall* at the first demand of the people; they are reduced to the position of simple agents; from a privileged stratum occupying highly remunerative “posts,” remunerated on a “bourgeois” scale, they become workers handling a special “kind of weapon,” and remunerated at a salary not exceeding that of a competent worker.

This, and this alone, constitutes the essence of the Paris Commune as a specific type of state. This truth was forgotten and perverted by the Plekhanovs (out-and-out chauvinists who have betrayed Marxism), the Kautskys (the people of the “Centre,” i.e., those who vacillate between chauvinism and Marxism) and generally by all those Social-Democrats, Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc., etc., who are now in control.

They confine themselves to phrases, evasions, tricks; they congratulate each other a thousand times upon the revolution, but they do not wish to *ponder* over what the Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies *are*. They refuse to recognise the obvious truth that inasmuch as the Soviets exist, *inasmuch as* they are a power, we have in Russia a state of the *type* of the Paris Commune.

I have underscored the words *inasmuch as*, for it is only an incipient power. By direct agreement with the bourgeois Provisional Government and by a series of actual concessions, it *has surrendered and is surrendering* its position to the bourgeoisie.

Why? Is it because Chkheidze, Tseretelli, Steklov and Co. are making a “mistake”? Nonsense. Only a philistine can think so, not a Marxist. The reason is the *lack of class consciousness* and organisation among the workers and peasants. The “mistake” of the above-mentioned leaders is simply due to their petty-bour-

geois position, to the fact that instead of clarifying the minds of the workers, they *becloud* them; instead of dispersing petty-bourgeois illusions, they *instil* them; instead of freeing the masses from petty-bourgeois influence, they *consolidate* that influence.

It should therefore be clear why our comrades also are so mistaken in putting the question "simply": Should the Provisional Government be overthrown immediately?

My answer is: 1) It should be overthrown, for it is an oligarchical, bourgeois, and not a people's government, and *cannot* provide peace, or bread, or complete freedom; 2) It cannot be overthrown now, for it is being maintained by a direct and indirect, a formal and actual *agreement* with the Soviets of Workers' Deputies, and particularly with the chief Soviet, the Petrograd Soviet; 3) Generally speaking, it cannot be "overthrown" by any ordinary method, for it rests on the "*support*" given to the bourgeoisie by the *second* government—the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, which is the only possible revolutionary government directly expressing the mind and the will of the majority of the workers and peasants. Humanity has not yet evolved and we do not as yet know a type of government superior to and better than the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Workers', Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies.

In order to obtain the power of state the class conscious workers must win the majority to their side. *As long as* no violence is used against the masses, there is no other road to power. We are not Blanquists, we are not in favour of the seizure of power by a minority. We are Marxists, we stand for a proletarian class struggle against petty-bourgeois poison-gas, against chauvinist defenceism, phrases, and dependence on the bourgeoisie.

Let us create a proletarian Communist Party. Its elements have already been created by the best adherents of Bolshevism; let us close our ranks and carry on proletarian class work; then from among the proletarians, from among the *poor* peasants ever greater numbers will come over to our side. For *actual experience* will from day to day shatter the petty-bourgeois illusions of the "Social-Democrats"—Chkheidze, Tseretelli, Steklov, and the

rest—of the “Socialist-Revolutionaries,” petty bourgeois of a still purer water, and so on, and so forth.

The bourgeoisie stands for the undivided power of the bourgeoisie.

The class conscious workers stand for the undivided power of the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Workers', Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies. They stand for an undivided power made possible not by dubious ventures, but by the *enlightenment* of the prolétarian consciousness, by its *emancipation* from the influence of the bourgeoisie.

The petty bourgeoisie—“Social-Democrats,” Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc., etc., etc.,—vacillates and hinders this process of enlightenment and emancipation.

Such is the actual, the *class* relation of forces that is determining the tasks now facing us.

April 22 (9), 1917

LETTERS ON TACTICS

PREFACE

ON April 17 (4), 1917, I had occasion to speak in Petrograd on the subject indicated in the title. I spoke first at a meeting of Bolsheviks. They were delegates to the All-Russian Conference of Workers' and Soldiers' Soviets, who were about to return to their homes and therefore could not allow me to postpone my speech. Upon the conclusion of the meeting, the chairman, Comrade G. Zinoviev, proposed on behalf of the whole assembly that I should immediately repeat my speech at a joint meeting of Bolshevik and Menshevik delegates, who wished to consider the question of uniting the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.

Difficult though it was for me to repeat my speech forthwith, I nevertheless did not feel justified in refusing, since it was the request of *my comrades* as well as of the Mensheviks, who, because of their impending departure, were really unable to grant me a respite.

In the course of my speech I read the theses which were published in No. 26 of *Pravda*, on April 20 (7), 1917.¹

Both the theses and my report created dissension even among the Bolsheviks and the editors of *Pravda*. After a number of consultations, we unanimously concluded that the most expedient thing would be to discuss our differences *openly*, thus providing material for the All-Russian Conference of our Party (the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, united under the Central Committee) to be held in Petrograd on May 3 (April 20), 1917.

It is in pursuance of this decision calling for a discussion that I now publish the following letters. In them I do not pretend

¹ See "The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution," in this volume.—*Ed.*

to make an *exhaustive* study of the question, but wish only to outline the principal arguments, which especially and essentially affect the practical tasks of the working class movement.

FIRST LETTER

An Estimate of the Present Situation

Marxism demands an extremely precise and objectively verifiable analysis of the interrelation of classes and of the concrete peculiarities of each historical moment. We Bolsheviks have always tried faithfully to fulfil this demand, since it is absolutely imperative for a scientific foundation of politics.

"Our teaching is not a dogma, but a guide to action," Marx and Engels used to say; and they ridiculed, and rightly ridiculed, the learning and repetition by rote of "formulas" which at best are capable of giving only an outline of *general* tasks that are necessarily liable to be modified by the *concrete* economic and political conditions of each particular *phase* of the historical process.

What, then, are the clearly established objective *facts* that must guide the party of the revolutionary proletariat at present in defining the tasks and forms of its activity?

Both in my first *Letter from Afar* (*The First Stage of the First Revolution*), published in Nos. 14 and 15 of *Pravda*, of April 3 and 4 (March 21 and 22), 1917,¹ and in my theses, I define as the "specific feature of the present situation" in Russia the fact that it is a period of *transition* from the first stage of the revolution to the second. And I therefore considered the basic slogan, the "task of the day," at *that* moment to be: "Workers, you have displayed marvels of proletarian heroism, the heroism of the people, in the civil war against tsarism; you must display marvels of organisation, organisation of the proletariat and the people, in order to prepare for victory in the second stage of the revolution." (*Pravda*, No. 15.)

In what does the first stage consist?

In the transfer of the power of state to the bourgeoisie.

¹ Pp. 3-12 in this volume.—Ed.

Before the February-March Revolution of 1917, the state power in Russia was in the hands of one old class, namely, the feudal landed nobility, headed by Nicholas Romanov.

Now, after that revolution, the state power is in the hands of *another* class, a new class, namely, the *bourgeoisie*.

The transfer of state power from one class to another *class* is the first, the principal, the basic sign of a *revolution*, both in the strictly scientific and in the practical political meaning of the term.

To this extent, the bourgeois, or the bourgeois-democratic, revolution in Russia *has been completed*.

At this point we hear the clamour of the objectors, of those who so readily call themselves "old Bolsheviks": Did we not always maintain, they say, that the bourgeois-democratic revolution is completed only by the "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry"? Has the agrarian revolution, which is also a bourgeois-democratic revolution, ended? On the contrary, is it not a fact *that it has not even begun*?

My answer is: The Bolshevik slogans and ideas *in general* have been fully corroborated by history; but *concretely*, things have turned out *differently* than could have been anticipated (by anyone): they are more original, more specific, more variegated.

Had we ignored or forgotten this fact, we should have resembled those "old Bolsheviks" who have more than once played so sorry a part in the history of our Party by repeating a formula meaninglessly *learned by rote*, instead of *studying* the specific and new features of actual reality.

"The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" has *already* become a reality¹ in the Russian revolution; for this "formula" envisages only the *interrelation of classes*, but does not envisage the *concrete political institution which gives effect* to this interrelation, to this co-operation. "The Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies"—here we have the "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" already accomplished in reality.

¹ In a certain form and to a certain extent.

This formula is already antiquated. Events have removed it from the realm of formulas into the realm of reality, clothed it in flesh and blood, lent it concrete form, and *by this very act* modified it.

A new and different task now faces us: to effect a split *within* this dictatorship between the proletarian elements (the anti-defencist, internationalist, "communist" elements, who stand for a transition to the commune) and the petty-proprietor or *petty-bourgeois* elements (Chkhaidze, Tseretelli, Steklov, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and other revolutionary defencists, who are opposed to the movement towards the commune and who favour "supporting" the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois government).

Whoever speaks *now* of a "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" only is behind the times, has consequently in effect *gone over* to the side of the petty bourgeoisie and is against the proletarian class struggle. He deserves to be consigned to the archive of "Bolshevik" pre-revolutionary antiques (which might be called the archive of "old Bolsheviks").

The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry has already been realised, but in an extremely original form, and with a number of highly important modifications. I will deal with them in one of my subsequent letters. For the present it is essential to realise the incontestable truth that a Marxist must take cognizance of actual events, of the precise facts of *reality*, and must not cling to a past theory, which, like all theories, at best only outlines the main and the general, and only *approximates* to an inclusive grasp of the complexities of living reality.

"Theory, my friend, is grey, but green is the eternal tree of life."

He who continues to regard the "completion" of the bourgeois revolution *in the old way* sacrifices living Marxism to the dead letter.

According to the old conception, the rule of the proletariat and peasantry, their dictatorship, can and must come after the rule of the bourgeoisie.

But in actual fact it has already come. Indisputably so.

extremely original, novel and unprecedented *interlacing of the one with the other* has taken place. Side by side, existing together and simultaneously, we have both the rule of the bourgeoisie (the government of Lvov and Guchkov) and a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, the latter *voluntarily* ceding power to the bourgeoisie and voluntarily transforming itself into an appendage of the bourgeoisie.

For it must not be forgotten that in Petrograd the power is actually in the hands of the workers and soldiers: the new government does not and cannot use violence against them, for there is no police, no army separate from the people, no officialdom standing omnipotently above the people. This is a fact; and it is the kind of fact that is characteristic of a state of the type of the Paris Commune.¹ This fact does not fit into the old schemes. One must know how to adapt schemes to facts, rather than repeat words regarding a "dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" *in general*, words which have become meaningless.

In order the better to illuminate the question, let us approach it from another angle.

A Marxist must not abandon the solid ground of analysis of class relations. The bourgeoisie is in power. But is not the mass of the peasants *also* a bourgeoisie, only of a different stratum, a different kind, a different character? Whence does it follow that *this* stratum *cannot* come into power and thus "consummate" the bourgeois-democratic revolution? Why should this be impossible?

That is how the old Bolsheviks often argue.

My reply is that it is quite possible. But, when analysing any given situation, a Marxist must proceed *not from the possible*, but from the actual.

And actuality reveals the *fact*—that the freely elected soldiers' and peasants' deputies freely enter the second, the parallel government and freely supplement, develop and complete it. And, just as freely, they *surrender* their power to the bourgeoisie; which phenomenon does not in the least "undermine" the theory of Marxism, for, as we have always known and have repeatedly

¹ Regarding Lenin's conception of "a state of the type of the Paris Commune," cf. "A Dual Power," in this volume.—Ed.

pointed out, the bourgeoisie maintains itself not only by virtue of force but also by virtue of the lack of class consciousness, the clinging to old habits, the timidity and lack of organisation of the masses.

In view of this present-day actuality it is simply ridiculous to turn one's back on this fact and speak of "possibilities."

It is possible that the peasantry may seize all the land and the entire power. Far from forgetting this possibility, far from confining myself to the present moment only, I definitely and clearly formulate the agrarian programme in accordance with the *new* phenomenon, *viz.*, the profounder cleavage between the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants, on the one hand, and the peasant owners, on the other.

But there is another possibility; it is possible that the peasants will hearken to the advice of the petty-bourgeois party of Socialist-Revolutionaries, which has succumbed to the influence of the bourgeoisie, has gone over to defencism, and which advises waiting until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, even though the date of its convocation has not yet been fixed.¹

It is possible that the peasants will *preserve* and prolong their pact with the bourgeoisie, a pact which they have now concluded through the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in both form and deed.

Many things are possible. It would be a profound mistake to forget the agrarian movement and the agrarian programme. But it would be equally mistaken to forget *reality*, and reality reveals the fact that an *agreement*, or—to use a more exact, less legal, but more class-economic expression—that *class collaboration* exists between the bourgeoisie and the peasantry.

When this fact ceases to be a fact, when the peasantry severs itself from the bourgeoisie, when it seizes the land and power in

¹ Lest my words be misinterpreted, I shall anticipate and state at once: I am absolutely in favour of the *Soviets* of Agricultural Labourers and Peasants *immediately* taking possession of *all* the land; but they should *themselves* observe the strictest order and discipline, not permit the slightest damage to machinery, structures or livestock, and in no wise disorganise agriculture and the production of cereals, but rather develop them, for the soldiers need twice as much bread, and the people must not be allowed to starve.

spite of the bourgeoisie, that will be a new stage of the bourgeois-democratic revolution; and of that I will speak separately.

A Marxist who, in view of the possibility of such a stage in the future, were to forget his duties *at the present moment*, when the peasantry is *compromising* with the bourgeoisie, would become a petty bourgeois. For he would in practice be preaching to the proletariat *confidence* in the petty bourgeoisie ("the petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry, must separate itself from the bourgeoisie within the limits of the bourgeois-democratic revolution"). Because of the "possibility" of so charming and sweet a future in which the peasantry would not form the tail of the bourgeoisie, in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Chkhedizes, Tseretellis and Steklovs, would *not* be an appendage of the bourgeois government—because of the "possibility" of so pleasant a future, he would be forgetting *the unpleasant present*, in which the peasantry still forms the tail of the bourgeoisie, and in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Social-Democrats have not yet ceased to be appendages of the bourgeois government, His Majesty Lvov's opposition.

This hypothetical person would be a sugary Louis Blanc, a sugary Kautskian, but not a revolutionary Marxist.

But are we not in danger of falling into subjectivism, of wanting to "skip" over the bourgeois-democratic revolution—which has not yet been completed and has not yet freed itself of the peasant movement—directly to the socialist revolution?

I should be incurring this danger had I said: "No tsar, but a *workers' government*." But I did not say *that*; I said something else. I said that there can be no other government (barring a bourgeois government) in Russia but a government of the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. I said that power in Russia can now pass from Guchkov and Lvov *only* to the Soviets. And the fact is that in these Soviets the peasants predominate, the soldiers predominate—the petty bourgeois predominates, to use a scientific, Marxian term, to give a class designation and not a commonplace, philistine, professional designation.

I absolutely insured myself in my theses against skipping over

the still existing peasant movement, or the petty-bourgeois movement in general, against the workers' government *playing* at the "seizure of power," against any kind of Blanquist adventurism; for I directly referred to the experience of the Paris Commune. And this experience, as we know, and as was shown in detail by Marx in 1871 and by Engels in 1891, absolutely excluded Blanquism, absolutely ensured the direct, immediate and unconditional rule of the *majority* and the activity of the masses, but only to the extent of the *conscious* and intelligent action of the majority itself.

In the theses I definitely reduced the question to one of a *struggle for influence within* the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. In order to leave no trace of doubt in this respect, I *twice* emphasised in the theses the necessity for patient and persistent "explanatory" work "adapted to the *practical needs of the masses*."

Ignorant persons or renegades from Marxism, such as Mr. Plekhanov, may cry anarchism, Blanquism, and so forth. But those who really want to think and learn cannot fail to understand that Blanquism means the seizure of power by a minority, whereas the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies are admittedly the direct and immediate organisation of the *majority* of the people. Work confined to a struggle for influence *within* these Soviets cannot, absolutely *cannot*, blunder into the swamp of Blanquism. Nor can it blunder into the swamp of anarchism, for anarchism *denies the necessity for a state and for state power in the period of transition* from the rule of the bourgeoisie to the rule of the proletariat, whereas I, with a precision that excludes all possibility of misunderstanding, *insist on the necessity for a state in this period*, although, in accordance with Marx and the experience of the Paris Commune, not the usual parliamentary bourgeois state, but a state *without* a standing army, *without* a police opposed to the people, *without* an officialdom placed above the people.

When Mr. Plekhanov in his newspaper *Yedinstvo* clamorously inveighs against anarchism, he is only giving further proof of his rupture with Marxism. In reply to my challenge in *Pravda* (No.

26)¹ that he should tell what Marx and Engels taught regarding the state in the years 1871, 1872 and 1875, Mr. Plekhanov is and will be obliged to preserve silence on the essence of the question, and indulges instead in outcries in the spirit of the embittered bourgeoisie.

Mr. Plekhanov, the ex-Marxist, has *absolutely* failed to understand the Marxian doctrine of the state. By the way, the germs of this lack of understanding are to be observed in his German pamphlet on anarchism.

* * *

Let us now see how Comrade Kamenev in his article in No. 27 of *Pravda* formulates his "differences" with my theses and the views expressed above. It will help us to understand them more clearly.

"As regards Comrade Lenin's general scheme," writes Comrade Kamenev, "it appears to us unacceptable, inasmuch as it proceeds from the assumption that the bourgeois-democratic revolution *has been completed*, and is calculated on the immediate transformation of that revolution into a socialist revolution."

Here we have two major errors.

The first is that the question of the "completeness" of the bourgeois-democratic revolution is wrongly *formulated*. It is formulated in an abstract, simplified, monochromatic way, if we may so express it, which *does not* correspond to objective reality. Those who formulate the question *thus*, those who *now* ask, "Is the bourgeois-democratic revolution completed?" and *nothing more*, deprive themselves of the possibility of understanding the real situation, which is extraordinarily complicated and, at least, "bichromatic." This—as regards theory. In practice, they impotently capitulate to *petty-bourgeois revolutionism*.

And, indeed, in reality we find *both* the transfer of power to the bourgeoisie (a "completed" bourgeois-democratic revolution of the ordinary type) *and* the existence, side by side with the actual government, of a parallel government, which represents a

¹ See the conclusion of the article "The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution," in this volume.—Ed.

“revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.” This “also-government” has *voluntarily* ceded power to the bourgeoisie and has *voluntarily* chained itself to the bourgeois government.

Is this reality covered by the old-Bolshevik formula of Comrade Kamenev, which declares that “the bourgeois-democratic revolution is not completed”?

No, that formula is antiquated. It is worthless. It is dead. And all attempts to revive it will be vain.

Secondly, a practical question. Who can say whether a special “revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry,” *detached* from the bourgeois government, is now still possible in Russia? Marxist tactics must not be based on unknown factors.

But if it is still possible, then there is one, and only one way to obtain it, namely, the immediate, decisive and irrevocable severance of the proletarian communist elements from the petty-bourgeois elements.

Why?

Because it is not by chance but by necessity that the whole petty bourgeoisie has turned towards chauvinism (defencism), towards “supporting” the bourgeoisie, that it has accepted dependence on the bourgeoisie and fears to do without the bourgeoisie.

How can the petty bourgeoisie be “pushed” into power, when the petty bourgeoisie could assume power now, but *does not wish to*?

Only the severance of the proletarian, Communist Party and only a proletarian class struggle exempt from the timidity of the petty bourgeois; only the consolidation of proletarians exempt from the influence of the petty bourgeoisie both in deed and in word, can make things so “hot” for the petty bourgeoisie that, under certain circumstances, it will be *obliged* to assume power. It is not even impossible that Guchkov and Milyukov—again under certain circumstances—will be in favour of full and undivided power being assumed by Chkheidze, Tseretelli, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Steklov, because, after all, they are all “defencists”!

Those who at once, immediately and irrevocably, separate the proletarian elements of the Soviets (*i.e.*, the proletarian, Communist Party) from the petty-bourgeois elements, will correctly express the interests of the movement in both eventualities: *both* in the eventuality that Russia will still pass through a special "dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry," not subordinated to the bourgeoisie, *and* in the eventuality that the petty bourgeoisie will not be able to sever itself from the bourgeoisie and will for ever (that is, until socialism is established) waver between us and it.

Those who in their activities are guided by the simple formula, "The bourgeois-democratic revolution is not completed," give, as it were, a certain guarantee that the petty bourgeoisie is capable of becoming independent of the bourgeoisie; and by that very fact they hopelessly surrender themselves to the tender mercies of the petty bourgeoisie.

Incidentally, on the subject of the "formula," the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, it would not be amiss to recall that in my article "Two Tactics" (July 1905) I particularly pointed out (*Twelve Years*, p. 435) that:

"Like everything else in the world, the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry has a past and a future. Its past is autocracy, serfdom, monarchy and privileges. . . . Its future is the struggle against private property, the struggle of the wage worker against his master, the struggle for socialism. . . ."¹

The mistake made by Comrade Kamenev is that even now, in 1917, he sees only the *past* of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, when, as a matter of fact, its *future* has already begun, for the interests and policies of the wage earner and the master have already become sundered *in fact*, and, moreover, on such an important question as "defencism," the attitude towards the imperialist war.

And this brings me to the second mistake in the remarks of Comrade Kamenev quoted above. He reproaches me with the fact that my scheme "is calculated on the immediate transformation of that [bourgeois-democratic] revolution into a socialist revolution."

¹ See Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. III, "The Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution," p. 99.

That is not true. Far from "calculating" on the "immediate transformation" of our revolution into a *socialist* revolution, I actually caution against it, and in Thesis No. 8 plainly state: "Our *immediate* task" is *not* the "introduction of socialism. . . ."

Is it not obvious that if one calculates on the immediate transformation of our revolution into a socialist revolution one cannot be opposed to the introduction of socialism as an immediate task?

Moreover, it is not possible to establish even a "commune state" (*i.e.*, a state organised on the type of the Paris Commune) in Russia "immediately," since that would require that the *majority* of the deputies in all (or in most of) the Soviets should clearly recognise the utter erroneousness and perniciousness of the tactics and policy of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Chkhoidze, Tseretelli, Steklov, etc. And I explicitly declared that in this respect I calculate only on "patient" explanation (is it necessary to be patient in order to bring about a change which can be realised "immediately"?).

Comrade Kamenev rather "impatiently" let himself go and repeated the bourgeois prejudice regarding the Paris Commune, namely, that it wanted to introduce socialism "immediately." That is not so. The Commune, unfortunately, was far too slow in introducing socialism. The real essence of the Commune lies not where the bourgeois usually looks for it, but in the creation of a particular type of *state*. A state of this type has *already* been born in Russia: it is the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

Comrade Kamenev has not pondered over the fact and the significance of the *existing* Soviets, their identity as to type and social and political character with the state of the Commune; and instead of studying a *fact*, he talks of what I allegedly calculated on as a thing of the "immediate" future. The result is, unfortunately, a repetition of the trick practised by many bourgeois: attention is diverted from the question of the *nature* of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, of whether they are a type superior to the parliamentary republic, whether they are more *beneficial* to the people, more *democratic* and more *adapted*, for instance, to the struggle for bread—attention is diverted from this

essential, immediate question, rendered urgent by the force of events, to the frivolous, pseudo-scientific, but in reality hollow and professorially lifeless question of "calculations on an immediate transformation."

A frivolous question falsely stated. I "calculate" *solely* and *exclusively* on the workers, soldiers and peasants being able to tackle better than the officials, better than the police, the *practical* and difficult problems of increasing the production of foodstuffs and their better distribution, the better provisioning of the soldiers, etc., etc.

I am profoundly convinced that the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies will develop the independent activity of the *masses* of the people far more quickly and far more effectively than a parliamentary republic (I will make a comparison of the two types of state in greater detail in another letter). They will decide more effectively, more practically, and more correctly what steps can be taken towards socialism, and how. Control over a bank, amalgamation of all banks into one, is not *yet* socialism, but it is a *step* towards socialism. Today such steps are being taken in Germany by the *Junkers* and the bourgeoisie against the interests of the people. Tomorrow, if the entire power of the state is in its hands, the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies will more effectively take these steps to the advantage of the people.

And what renders these steps *essential*?

Famine. Economic disorganisation. Impending collapse. The horrors of war. The horror of the wounds being inflicted on mankind by the war.

Comrade Kamenev concludes his article with the statement that "in a broad discussion he hopes to carry his point of view, the only possible point of view for the revolutionary Social-Democratic Party, if it wishes, as it must, to remain to the end the party of the revolutionary masses of the proletariat, and not to become transformed into a group of Communist propagandists."

It seems to me that these words betray a completely erroneous estimate of the situation. Comrade Kamenev contrasts a "party of the masses" and a "group of propagandists." But just now the "masses" have yielded to the intoxication of "revolutionary" de-

fencism. Is it not more worthy of internationalists at this moment to be able to resist "mass" intoxication than to "wish to remain" with the masses, *i.e.*, to succumb to the general epidemic? Have we not seen how the chauvinists in all the belligerent countries of Europe justified themselves by the wish to "remain with the masses"? Is it not essential to be able for a while to remain in a minority as against the "mass" intoxication? Is it not the work of the propagandists which at the present moment is the main factor in *clearing* the proletarian line of defencist and petty-bourgeois "mass" intoxication? It was just this fusion of the masses, proletarian and non-proletarian, without distinction of class differences among those masses, that formed one of the conditions for the defencist epidemic. To speak with contempt of a "group of propagandists" advocating a *proletarian* line is, we think, not altogether becoming.

April 1917

THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN OUR REVOLUTION

DRAFT OF A PLATFORM FOR THE PROLETARIAN PARTY

THE historical moment through which Russia is now passing is marked by the following main characteristics:

THE CLASS CHARACTER OF THE REVOLUTION

1) The old tsarist power, representing a handful of feudal landlords who commanded the entire machinery of state (the army, the police and the bureaucracy), has been broken and set aside, but not utterly destroyed. Formally, the monarchy has not been abolished. The Romanov gang continues to hatch its monarchist intrigues. The vast landed possessions of the feudal landlords have not been abolished.

2) The state power in Russia has passed into the hands of a new *class*, namely, the bourgeoisie and the landlords who have turned bourgeois. *To that extent* the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia has been completed.

Having come to power, the bourgeoisie formed a *bloc* with openly monarchist elements, notorious for their exceptionally ardent support of Nicholas the Bloody and Stolypin the Hangman in 1906-14 (Guchkov and others to the Right of the Cadets). The new bourgeois government of Lvov and Co. attempted to negotiate with the Romanovs for the restoration of the monarchy in Russia. While making a noisy play of revolutionary phrases, this government filled positions of authority with partisans of the old regime. It strove to reform the machinery of state (the army, the police and the bureaucracy) as little as possible, and has turned it over to the bourgeoisie. This government has already begun to hinder the revolutionary initiative of mass action and the seizure of power by the people *from below*, which is the *sole* guarantee of any real success of the revolution.

The government has not yet fixed a date for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. It is not laying a finger on the landed estates, the material foundation of feudal tsarism. The government does not even contemplate starting an investigation and making public the activities of the monopolistic financial concerns, such as the large banks, the syndicates and cartels of the capitalists, etc., or of exercising control over them.

The chief, the decisive ministerial posts in the new government (the Ministry for the Interior and the Ministry for War, *i.e.*, the command over the army, the police, the bureaucracy and the entire machinery for the oppression of the masses) are filled by notorious monarchists and supporters of agrarian landlordism. The Cadets, those day-old republicans, those involuntary republicans, have been assigned posts of secondary importance, having no direct relation to the exercise of power over the people or to the machinery of state. A. Kerensky, a Trudovik,¹ an "also-Socialist," has no function whatsoever, except to lull the vigilance and attention of the people with well-sounding phrases.

For the reasons enumerated, the new bourgeois government does not deserve the confidence of the proletariat even in the sphere of internal politics, and no support of that government by the proletariat is permissible.

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT

3) In the domain of foreign policy, which has come to the forefront owing to objective circumstances, the new government stands for the continuation of the imperialist war, a war waged in concert with the imperialist powers, Great Britain, France, and others, for the division of capitalist spoils and for the strangling of small and feeble nations.

Subordinated to the interests of Russian capital and of its powerful protector and master, Anglo-French imperialist capital, the most wealthy in the world, the new government, notwithstanding the wishes expressed in the most definite fashion on behalf of the undoubted majority of the peoples of Russia by the Soviets

¹ Trudoviki, or Group of Toil, the name adopted by the peasant representatives in the Duma.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, has taken no real steps whatsoever to put a stop to the slaughter of nations in the interests of the capitalists. It has not even published the secret treaties of a frankly predatory character (for the partition of Persia, the spoliation of China, the spoliation of Turkey, the partition of Austria, the annexation of Eastern Prussia, the annexation of the German colonies, etc.), which, as everybody knows, bind Russia to Anglo-French predatory imperialist capital. It has *confirmed* these treaties concluded by tsarism, which for centuries robbed and oppressed more peoples than other tyrants and despots, and which not only oppressed, but also disgraced and debauched, the Great-Russian people by transforming it into an executioner of other peoples.

The new government has confirmed these shameful cut-throat treaties and has not proposed an immediate armistice to all the belligerent peoples, in spite of the clearly expressed demand of the majority of the peoples of Russia, voiced through the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. It has evaded the issue with the help of solemn, sonorous, ceremonious, but absolutely empty declarations and phrases, such as in the mouths of bourgeois diplomats have always served, and still serve, to deceive the confiding and gullible masses of the oppressed people.

4) Hence, the new government is not deserving of the slightest confidence in the field of foreign policy; and to demand that it should make known the will for peace of the peoples of Russia, that it should renounce annexations, and so forth, is in practice to deceive the people, to inspire them with hopes that cannot be realised, to retard their mental enlightenment, indirectly to reconcile them to the continuation of a war the social character of which is determined not by good intentions, but by the class character of the government that wages the war, by the connection between the class represented by this government and the imperialist finance capital of Russia, Great Britain, France, etc., by the *real and actual policy* which that class is pursuing.

A PECULIAR DUAL POWER AND ITS CLASS SIGNIFICANCE

5) The main peculiarity of our revolution, a peculiarity urgently requiring the most thoughtful analysis, is the *dual power*

which was established in the very first days of the triumph of the revolution.

This dual power is manifested in the existence of *two* governments: one is the main, the real, the actual government of the bourgeoisie, the "Provisional Government" of Lvov and Co., which controls all the organs of power; the other is a supplementary and parallel government, a "supervisory" government in the shape of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which possesses no organs of state power, but which derives its authority directly from a clear and indisputable majority of the people, from the armed workers and soldiers.

The class origin and the class significance of this dual power consist in the fact that the March Revolution not only swept away the tsarist monarchy completely, not only transferred the entire power to the bourgeoisie, but also *approached very closely* to the point of a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. The Petrograd and the other, the local, Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies represent precisely such a dictatorship (that is, a government power resting not on law but on the direct force of armed masses of the population), a dictatorship precisely of the above-mentioned classes.

6) The second peculiarity of the Russian revolution, a highly important one, is the circumstance that the Petrograd Soviet of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies, which, everything goes to show, enjoys the confidence of most of the local Soviets, is *voluntarily* transferring the power of the state, is voluntarily *surrendering* its own supremacy, to the bourgeoisie and its Provisional Government; and, having entered into an agreement to support the latter, is limiting its own function to that of an observer supervising the convocation of the Constituent Assembly (the date of which has not yet even been announced by the Provisional Government).

This extremely peculiar circumstance, unparalleled in history in such a form, has led to the *interlocking of two dictatorships*: the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie (for the Provisional Government of Lvov and Co. is a dictatorship, *i.e.*, a power based not on law, nor on the previously expressed will of the people, but on seizure by force, accomplished by a definite class, namely, the

bourgeoisie) and the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry (the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies).

There is not the slightest doubt that such an "interlocking" cannot last long. Two powers *cannot* exist in a state. One of them is bound to give way; and the entire Russian bourgeoisie is already straining every nerve, is everywhere striving in every possible way to remove and enfeeble the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, to compel them to give way, and to establish the sole power of the bourgeoisie.

The dual power expresses but a *transitional* phase in the development of the revolution, in which it has gone farther than the ordinary bourgeois-democratic revolution, but *has not yet reached* a "pure" dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.

The class significance (and class explanation) of this transitional and unstable situation is as follows: like all revolutions, our revolution, in the struggle against tsarism, demanded the greatest heroism and self-sacrifice on the part of the masses and moreover immediately *drew* unprecedentedly vast numbers of ordinary citizens *into the movement*.

From the point of view of science and practical politics, one of the chief symptoms of *every* real revolution is the rapid, sudden, and sharp increase in the number of "ordinary citizens" who begin to participate actively, independently and vigorously in political life and in *the organisation of the state*.

Such is the case in Russia. Russia at present is seething. Millions of people who had been politically dormant for ten years and politically crushed by the terrible oppression of tsarism and by inhuman toil for the landlords and manufacturers *have awakened and been drawn into politics*. Who are these millions? For the most part small proprietors, petty bourgeois, people midway between the capitalists and the wage workers. Russia is the most petty-bourgeois of European countries.

A gigantic petty-bourgeois wave has swept over everything and overwhelmed the class conscious proletariat, not only by force of numbers but also ideologically; that is, it has infected wide circles of workers with the petty-bourgeois outlook on politics.

The petty bourgeois are in reality dependent upon the bour-

geoisie, for they live like masters and not like proletarians (from the point of view of their *place* in social *production*), and follow the bourgeoisie in their way of thinking.

An attitude of unreasoning confidence in the capitalists—the worst foes of peace and socialism—characterises the politics of the Russian masses at the present moment; such is the fruit that has *grown* with revolutionary rapidity on the social and economic soil of the most petty-bourgeois of European countries. That is the *class* basis for the “agreement” between the Provisional Government and the Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies (I must emphasise that I am referring not so much to a formal agreement as to the *practical* support, the tacit understanding, the naively trustful surrender of power), an agreement which has presented the Guchkovs with a choice morsel—real power, and the Soviet with promises and honours (for the time being), with flattery, phrases, assurances, and the bowings and scrapings of the Kerenskys.

The reverse side of the medal is the inadequate numerical strength of the proletariat in Russia and its insufficient class consciousness and organisation.

The Narodnik ¹ parties, including the Socialist-Revolutionaries, have always been petty-bourgeois. This is also true of the party of the Organisation Committee (Chkheidze, Tseretelli, etc.). The independent revolutionaries (Steklov and others) have similarly drifted with the tide, or have not succeeded in battling the tide.

THE SPECIFIC NATURE OF THE TACTICS WHICH FOLLOW FROM THE ABOVE

7) For the Marxist, who must reckon with objective facts, with the masses, classes, rather than with individuals, and so on, the specific nature of the present situation as described above must determine the specific tactics of the *present* moment.

The specific character of these tactics calls for the necessity of “pouring vinegar and bile into the sweet water of revolutionary-

¹ The Narodnik or “populist” parties, representatives of a petty-bourgeois, peasant socialism, originated in Russia in the middle of the last century.
—Ed. Eng. ed.

democratic eloquence" (as a fellow member of the Central Committee of our Party, Teodorovich, so aptly expressed it at yesterday's session of the All-Russian Congress of Railwaymen in Petrograd). Our work must be one of criticism, of *explaining* the mistakes of the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionary and Social-Democratic parties, of preparing and welding the elements of a *class conscious* proletarian Communist Party, and of *releasing* the proletariat from the general petty-bourgeois enchantment.

This may appear to be "nothing more" than propaganda work, but in reality it is extremely practical revolutionary work; for there is no advance for a revolution that has come to a standstill, that has choked itself with phrases, and that keeps marking time, *not because* of external obstacles, *not because of the violence* of the bourgeoisie (so far Guchkov only threatens to use violence against the soldiers), but because of the naive trustfulness of the masses.

Only by combating this naive trustfulness (and one can combat it only ideologically, by comradely persuasion, by pointing to the *lessons of experience*) can we escape the prevailing *orgy of revolutionary phrases* and make real progress in stimulating the class consciousness both of the proletariat and of the masses in general, as well as in stimulating their bold and determined initiative *in the localities* and the arbitrary realisation, development and consolidation of liberties, democracy, and of the principle of the ownership of all the land by the people.

8) The world-wide experience of bourgeois and landlord governments has developed two methods of keeping the people in subjection. The first is violence. Nicholas Romanov I, called Nicholas Palkin,¹ and Nicholas II, the Bloody, demonstrated to the Russian people the maximum of what can and cannot be done by this hangman's method. But there is another method, best developed by the English and French bourgeoisie, who "learnt their lesson" in a series of great revolutions and revolutionary movements of the masses. That is the method of deception, flattery, fine

¹ From the Russian word *palka*, meaning stick, club.—Ed. Eng. ed.

phrases, numberless promises, petty sops, and concessions of the unessential while retaining the essential.

The specific feature of the present moment in Russia is a dizzy transition from the first method to the second, from violent oppression of the people to *flattering* and deceiving the people by false promises. Vaska the cat listens, but goes on eating.¹ Milyukov and Guchkov hold power, they are protecting the profits of capitalism and conducting an imperialist war in the interests of Russian and Anglo-French capital, and they deliver themselves of promises, declamations and impressive statements when replying to the speeches of "cooks" like Chkheidze, Tseretelli and Steklov, who threaten, exhort, conjure, beseech, demand and declare. . . . Vaska the cat listens, but goes on eating.

But from day to day trustful naiveté and naive trustfulness will diminish, especially among the proletarians and poor peasants, who are being taught by experience (by their social and economic position) to distrust the capitalists.

The leaders of the petty bourgeoisie "must" teach the people to trust the bourgeoisie. The proletarians must teach the people to distrust the bourgeoisie.

REVOLUTIONARY DEFENCISM AND ITS CLASS NATURE

9) *Revolutionary defencism* must be regarded as the most important and striking manifestation of the petty-bourgeois wave that has overwhelmed "nearly everything." There can be no greater hindrance to the progress and success of the Russian revolution.

Those who have yielded on this point and are unable to extricate themselves are lost to the revolution. But the masses yield in a different way from the leaders; and they extricate themselves *differently*, by a different course of development, by different means.

Revolutionary defencism, is, on the one hand, a result of the deception practised on the masses by the bourgeoisie, a result

¹ A quotation from a fable by Krylov. The cook finds the cat, Vaska, swallowing a chicken; the cook uses moral suasion. The cat listens, but goes on eating.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

of the naive trustfulness of the peasants and a section of the workers; it is, on the other, an expression of the interests and the viewpoint of the small master, who is to some extent interested in annexations and bank profits, and who "religiously" guards the traditions of tsarism, which demoralised the Great-Russians by making them do hangman's work among the other peoples.

The bourgeoisie deceives the people by playing upon the noble pride of the revolution and by pretending that the *social and political* character of the war, as far as Russia is concerned, underwent a change with this stage of the revolution, with the substitution of the bourgeois near-republic of Guchkov and Milyukov for the tsarist monarchy. The people believe it—for the time being—owing in a large degree to old-time prejudices, by virtue of which they regard the other peoples of Russia, *i.e.*, the non-Great-Russians, almost as the property and patrimony of the Great-Russians. This vile demoralisation of the Great-Russian people by the tsarist government, which taught them to regard the other peoples as something inferior, something belonging "by right" to Great Russia, could not be cured instantly.

What is required of us is the *ability* to explain to the masses that the social and political character of the war is determined not by the "good intentions" of individuals or groups, or even of peoples, but by the position of the *class* which conducts the war, by the *class policy* of which the war is a continuation, by the *ties* of capital, which is the dominant economic force in modern society, by the *imperialist character* of international capital, by Russia's dependence in finance, banking and diplomacy upon Great Britain, France, etc. To explain this to the masses skilfully and in a comprehensible way *is not easy*; none of us could do it at once without committing errors.

But such, and only such, must be the direction or, rather, the contents of our propaganda. The slightest concession to revolutionary defencism is *treason to socialism* and a complete renunciation of *internationalism*, no matter by what fine phrases and "practical" considerations it is justified.

The slogan "Down with the war" is, of course, a correct one. But it fails to take into account the specific nature of the tasks

of the present moment and of the necessity of approaching the masses in a *different* way. It is, in my opinion, similar to the slogan "Down with the tsar," with which the inexperienced agitator of the "good old days" went simply and directly to the country districts—and received a beating. The rank-and-file supporters of revolutionary defencism are *sincere*, not in the personal, but in the class sense, *i.e.*, they belong to *classes* (workers and poor peasants) which *in actual fact* have nothing to gain from annexations and the strangulation of other peoples. Their position is different from that of the bourgeois and the intellectuals, who know very well that *it is impossible* to renounce annexations without renouncing the rule of capital, and who unscrupulously deceive the masses with fine phrases, with unlimited promises and endless assurances.

The rank-and-file believer in defencism regards the matter in a simple, matter-of-fact way: "I don't want annexations, but the German is after me; therefore I am defending a just cause and not imperialist interests." It must be explained very patiently to a man like this that it is not a question of his personal wishes, but of mass, *class*, political relations and conditions, of the connection between the war and the interests of capital, the international network of banks, and so forth. Only such a struggle against defencism will be serious and promising of success—perhaps not a rapid success, but one that will be real and durable.

HOW CAN THE WAR BE ENDED?

10) The war cannot be ended "at will." It cannot be ended by the decision of one party. It cannot be ended by "sticking your bayonet in the ground," as one soldier, a defencist, expressed it.

The war cannot be ended by an "agreement" between the Socialists of the various countries, by the "action" of the proletarians of all countries, by the "will" of the peoples, and so forth. Phrases of this kind, which fill the articles of the defencist and semi-defencist-semi-internationalist papers and innumerable resolutions, appeals and manifestoes, and the resolutions of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, are nothing but empty, innocent and pious wishes of the petty bourgeois. Nothing is more pernicious than such phrases as "ascertaining the will of the peo-

ples for peace," as the *sequence* of revolutionary action of the proletariat (after the Russian proletariat comes the "turn" of the German), etc. All this is in the spirit of Louis Blanc, daydreaming, a game of "political campaigning," and in reality but a repetition of the fable of Vaska the cat.

The war is not a product of the evil will of rapacious capitalists, although it is undoubtedly being fought *solely* in their interests and they alone are being enriched by it. The war is a product of half a century of development of world capitalism and of its million threads and connections. One *cannot* escape from the imperialist war, one *cannot* achieve a democratic, non-oppressive peace without first overthrowing the power of capital and without the transfer of the power of state to another class, the proletariat.

The Russian revolution of February-March 1917 was the beginning of the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war. The revolution took the *first* step towards ending the war; but it requires a *second* step, namely, the transfer of the power of state to the proletariat, to make the end of the war a *certainty*. This will be the beginning of a "breach in the front" on a world-wide scale, a breach in the front of the interests of capital; and only after having broken *this* front *can* the proletariat save mankind from the horrors of war and endow it with the blessings of a durable peace.

To such a "breach in the front" of capitalism the Russian revolution has *already* brought the Russian proletariat by creating the Soviets of Workers' Deputies.

THE NEW TYPE OF STATE DEVELOPING IN OUR REVOLUTION

11) The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants' and other Deputies are not understood; not only in the sense that their class character, their part in the *Russian* revolution, is not clear to the majority, but also in the sense that they constitute a new form, or rather a *new type of state*.

The most perfect and advanced type of bourgeois state is the *parliamentary democratic republic*: power is vested in parliament; the state machine, the apparatus and organ of administration, is of

the customary kind: a standing army, a police and a bureaucracy which in practice is permanent and privileged and stands *above* the people.

But since the end of the nineteenth century, revolutionary epochs have been producing a *superior* type of democratic state, a state which in certain respects, as Engels puts it, ceases to be a state, is "no longer a state in the proper sense of the word." This state is of the type of the Paris Commune, one in which a standing army and police severed from the people are *replaced* by the directly armed people themselves. *This feature* constituted the very essence of the Commune, which has been so maligned and slandered by the bourgeois writers, and to which has been erroneously ascribed, among other things, the intention of "introducing" socialism immediately.

This is the type of state which the Russian revolution *begun* to create in the years 1905 and 1917. A Republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants' and other Deputies, united in an All-Russian Constituent Assembly of the people's representatives, or in a Council of Soviets, etc., is what is *being realised* in our country now, at this juncture, by the initiative of millions of people who, of their own accord, are creating a democracy *in their own way*, without waiting until Messieurs the Cadet professors draft their legislative projects for a parliamentary bourgeois republic, or until the pedants and routine worshippers of petty-bourgeois "Social-Democracy," like Plekhanov and Kautsky, renounce their distortions of the teaching of Marxism on the subject of the state.

Marxism differs from anarchism in that it recognises *the necessity for the state* and for state power in a period of revolution in general, and in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism in particular.

Marxism differs from the petty-bourgeois, opportunist "Social-Democracy" of Plekhanov, Kautsky and Co. in that it recognises that during the said periods what is required is a state *not* of the customary parliamentary bourgeois republican type, but of the type of the Paris Commune.

The main differences between a state of the latter type and the bourgeois state are as follows.

It is extremely easy (as history proves) to revert from a bourgeois republic to a monarchy, since all the machinery of repression, viz., the army, the police, and the bureaucracy, is left intact. The Commune and the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants' and other Deputies *smash* and abolish that machinery.

A parliamentary bourgeois republic hampers and stifles the independent political life of the *masses* and their direct participation in the *democratic* organisation of the life of the state from top to bottom. The contrary is the case with the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

The latter reproduce the type of state that was being evolved by the Paris Commune and that Marx said was "the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of labour."

The objection is usually offered that the Russian people are not yet prepared for the "introduction" of the Commune. This was the argument of the serfowners, who claimed that the peasants were not prepared for freedom. The Commune, i.e., the Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies, does not "introduce," does not intend to "introduce," and must not introduce reforms which have not absolutely matured both in economic reality and in the consciousness of the overwhelming majority of the people. The greater the economic collapse and the crisis produced by the war, the more urgent becomes the need for a more perfect political form, which will *facilitate* the healing of the frightful wounds inflicted by the war upon mankind. The less the organisational experience of the Russian people, the more determinedly must we *proceed* to organisational development by the people themselves, and not merely by the bourgeois politicians and well-placed bureaucrats.

The sooner we cast off the old prejudices of a Marxism falsified and distorted by Plekhanov, Kautsky and Co., the more diligently we set about helping the people to organise Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies everywhere and immediately, and the latter to take *all aspects* of life under their control, and

the longer Messrs. Lvov and Co. delay the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, the easier will it be for the people (through the medium of the Constituent Assembly, or independently of the Constituent Assembly, if Lvov delays its convocation too long) to cast their decision in favour of a Republic of Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies. Blunders during the new process of organisational development by the people themselves are at first inevitable; but it is better to blunder and go forward than to *wait* until the professors of law summoned by Mr. Lvov have drafted their laws for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, for the perpetuation of the parliamentary bourgeois republic and for the strangling of the Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies.

If we organise and conduct our propaganda efficiently, not only the proletarians, but nine-tenths of the peasantry will be opposed to the re-establishment of the police, will be opposed to an irremovable and privileged bureaucracy and to an army separated from the people. And that alone makes up the new type of state.

12) The substitution of a people's militia for the police is a reform that follows from the entire course of the Revolution and that is now being introduced in most localities of Russia. We must explain to the masses that in the majority of revolutions of the usual bourgeois type, this reform has never been long-lived, and that even the most democratic and republican bourgeoisie soon re-established the police of the old tsarist type, a police separated from the people, controlled by the bourgeoisie and adapted in every way to oppressing the people.

There is only one means of *preventing* the re-establishment of the police, namely, to organise a national militia and to fuse it with the army (the standing army to be replaced by the universally armed people). Service in this militia shall extend to all citizens of both sexes between the ages of fifteen and sixty-five, if these tentatively suggested age limits determine the participation of youths and old people. Capitalists must pay their workers, servants and others for the days devoted to public service in the militia. Unless women are brought to take an independent part not only in political life generally, but also in daily and universal

public service, it is idle to speak even of a complete and stable democracy, let alone socialism. Certain "police" functions, such as the care of the sick and of homeless children, pure food supervision, etc., will never be satisfactorily discharged until women are on a footing of perfect equality with men, not only on paper but in reality.

The tasks which the proletariat must put before the masses in order to protect, consolidate and develop the revolution are to prevent the re-establishment of the police and to mobilise the organisational forces of the entire people for the creation of a universal militia.

THE AGRARIAN AND THE NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

13) At the present moment it is impossible to say for certain whether a powerful agrarian revolution will develop in the Russian countryside in the near future. We cannot say how profound is the class cleavage, which has undoubtedly grown more profound latterly, between the agricultural labourers, wage workers, and poor peasants ("semi-proletarians") on the one hand, and the well-to-do and middle peasants (capitalists and petty capitalists) on the other. Such questions will be decided, and can be decided, only by actual experience.

But as the party of the proletariat we are in duty bound not only to announce an agrarian programme immediately but also to advocate practical measures which are immediately realisable in the interests of the peasant agrarian revolution in Russia.

We must demand the nationalisation of *all* the land, i.e., that all land in the state should become the possession of the central state power. This power shall fix the size, etc., of the migration fund,¹ issue laws for the conservation of forests, for land improvement, etc., and absolutely prohibit the intermediary of middlemen between the owner of the land, i.e., the state, and the tenant, i.e. the tiller (prohibit all private transfer of land). But the disposal of the land, the determination of the local regulations governing land tenure and use, must in no case be left in the hands of the

¹ Lands assigned for allotment to peasants desirous of migrating from congested areas.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

reaucrats and officials, but must be vested exclusively in the local and regional *Soviets of Peasants' Deputies*.

In order to improve the technique of grain growing and to increase output, and in order to develop rational cultivation on a large scale under public control, we must endeavour through the Peasants' Committees to secure the transformation of every confiscated estate into a large model farm controlled by the *Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies*.

In order to counteract the petty-bourgeois phrases and policy prevailing among the Socialist-Revolutionaries, particularly the idle talk concerning "consumption standards," "labour standards," the "socialisation of the land," etc., the party of the proletariat must make it clear that small peasant farming under a commodity production system *offers no escape* for mankind from the poverty and oppression of the masses.

Without necessarily splitting the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies at once, the party of the proletariat must make clear the necessity of organising separate Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies and separate Soviets of deputies from the poor (semi-proletarian) peasants or, at least, of holding regular separate conferences of deputies of *this class position* in the shape of separate fractions or parties within the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies. Otherwise all the sugary petty-bourgeois talk of the Narodniki regarding the peasants in general will but serve as a shield for the deceit played on the propertyless mass by the well-to-do peasants, who are but a variety of *capitalists*.

To counteract the bourgeois-liberal or purely bureaucratic sermons preached by many Socialist-Revolutionaries and Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, who advise the peasants not to seize the landlords' estates and not to start agrarian reform pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, the party of the proletariat must urge the peasants to set about putting agrarian reform into effect at once, on their own initiative, and to con-

¹ Consumption standard: an allotment sufficiently large to supply the requirements of a peasant household. Labour standard: an allotment that can be cultivated by the members of the peasant's household.--*Ed. Eng. ed.*

fiscate the landlords' estates immediately upon the decision of the local peasants' deputies.

At the same time, it is particularly important to insist on the necessity of increasing the production of foodstuffs for the soldiers at the front and for the towns, and on the absolute inadmissibility of any damage to livestock, tools, machinery, structures, etc.

14) As regards the national question, the proletarian party first of all must insist on the promulgation and immediate realisation of complete freedom of secession from Russia for all nations and peoples who were oppressed by tsarism, or who were forcibly annexed to, or forcibly retained within, the boundaries of the state.

All statements, declarations and manifestoes concerning the renunciation of annexations which are not accompanied by the realisation of the right of secession are but bourgeois deceits practised on the people, or else pious petty-bourgeois aspirations.

The proletarian party strives to create as large a state as possible, for that is to the advantage of the toilers; it strives to bring about *closer ties* between nations and the *further fusion* of nations; but it desires to achieve this aim not by force, but by a free, fraternal union of the workers and the toiling masses of all nations.

The more democratic the Russian republic is and the more successfully it organises itself into a Republic of Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies, the more powerful will be the force of *voluntary* attraction towards such a republic on the part of the toiling masses of *all* nations.

Complete freedom of secession, the broadest local (and national) autonomy, and detailed guarantees of the rights of national minorities—such is the programme of the revolutionary proletariat.

NATIONALISATION OF THE BANKS AND CAPITALIST SYNDICATES

15) The party of the proletariat cannot set itself the aim of "introducing" socialism in a country of small peasantry as long as the overwhelming majority of the population has not realised the necessity for a socialist revolution.

But only bourgeois sophists, who hide behind "near-Marxist" phrases, can derive from this truth a justification of a policy of postponing immediate revolutionary measures, the time for which has become ripe, *which have been frequently resorted to during the war by a number of bourgeois states*, and which are absolutely essential in order to combat impending total economic disorganisation and famine.

Such measures as the nationalisation of the land and of the banks and syndicates of capitalists or, at least, the immediate establishment of the *control* of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies over them, measures which do not in any way imply the "introduction" of socialism, must be absolutely insisted on, and, whenever possible, introduced by revolutionary means. Without such measures, which are only steps towards socialism, and which are entirely feasible economically, it will be impossible to heal the wounds of the war and to prevent the impending collapse. The party of the revolutionary proletariat will never hesitate to lay hands on the fabulous profits of the capitalists and bankers who are scandalously enriching themselves on the war.

THE SITUATION WITHIN THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

16) The international obligations of the Russian working class are at the present time assuming prominence.

Everybody swears by internationalism these days. Even the chauvinist-defencists, even Messrs. Plekhanov and Potresov, even Kerensky, call themselves internationalists. All the more urgently, therefore, does it become the duty of the proletarian party to draw a clear, precise and definite distinction between internationalism in deeds and internationalism in words.

Mere appeals to the workers of all countries, empty assurances of devotion to internationalism, direct or indirect attempts to establish a "sequence" of revolutionary proletarian action in the various belligerent countries, efforts to conclude "agreements" between the Socialists of the belligerent countries on the question of the revolutionary struggle, pother over the summoning of Socialist congresses *for the purpose* of a peace campaign—no matter how sincere the authors of such ideas, efforts, and plans may be—

amount, as far as their *objective* significance is concerned, to mere talk, and *at best* are innocent and pious wishes, fit only to conceal the *deception* of the masses by the chauvinists. The French social-chauvinists, who are the most adroit and best-versed in methods of parliamentary juggling, have long ago broken the record for incredibly loud and resonant pacifist and internationalist phrases *coupled with* the most brazen betrayal of socialism and the International, the acceptance of posts in governments engaged in the imperialist war, the voting of credits or loans (as Chkheidze, Skobelev, Tseretelli, and Steklov have been doing recently in Russia) active opposition to the revolutionary struggle *in their own country*, etc., etc.

Good people often forget the brutal and savage setting of the imperialist World War. This setting does not tolerate phrases, and mocks at innocent and pious wishes.

There is one, and only one, kind of internationalism in deed: working wholeheartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle *in one's own country*, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy and material aid) such, and *only such, a struggle* and such a line in *every* country without exception.

Everything else is deception and Manilovism.

In the course of the two and half years of war the international Socialist and labour movement in *every* country has evolved three tendencies. Whoever ignores reality and refuses to recognise the existence of these three tendencies, to analyse them, to fight persistently for the tendency that is really internationalist, is doomed to impotence, helplessness and error.

The three tendencies are:

1) The social-chauvinists, *i.e.*, Socialists in word and chauvinists in action, people who are in favour of "national defence" in an imperialist war (and particularly in the present imperialist war).

These people are our *class* enemies. They have gone over to the bourgeoisie.

They include the majority of the official leaders of the official Social-Democratic parties in *all* countries—Plekhanov and

Co. in Russia, the Scheidemanns in Germany, Renaudel, Guesde and Sembat in France, Bissolati and Co. in Italy, Hyndman, the Fabians and the Labourites (the leaders of the "Labour Party") in England, Branting and Co. in Sweden, Troelstra and his party in Holland, Stauning and his party in Denmark, Victor Berger and the other "defenders of the fatherland" in America and so forth.

2) The second tendency is what is known as the "Centre," consisting of people who vacillate between the social-chauvinists and the true internationalists.

All those who belong to the "Centre" swear that they are Marxists and internationalists, that they are in favour of peace, of bringing every kind of "pressure" to bear upon the governments, of "demanding" that their own governments should "ascertain the will of the people for peace," that they favour all sorts of peace campaigns, that they are for a peace without annexations, etc., etc.—and *for peace with the social-chauvinists*. The "Centre" is for "unity," the "Centre" is opposed to a split.

The "Centre" is a realm of honeyed petty-bourgeois phrases, of internationalism in word and cowardly opportunism and fawning on the social-chauvinists in deed.

The fact of the matter is that the "Centre" is not convinced of the necessity for a revolution against one's own government; it does not preach revolution; it does not carry on a wholehearted revolutionary struggle; and in order to evade such a struggle it resorts to the tritest ultra-"Marxist" *excuses*.

The social-chauvinists are our *class enemies*, the *bourgeois* within the labour movement. They represent strata, or groups, or sections of the working class which have virtually been bribed by the bourgeoisie (by better wages, positions of honour, etc.), and which help *their* bourgeoisies to plunder and oppress small and weak peoples and to fight for the division of the capitalist spoils.

The "Centre" consists of routine-worshippers, slaves to rotten legality, corrupted by the atmosphere of parliamentarism, bureaucrats accustomed to snug positions and soft jobs. Historically and economically speaking, they do not represent a *separate* stratum but are a *transition* from a past phase of the labour movement—the phase between 1871 and 1914, which gave much that

is valuable to the proletariat, particularly in the indispensable art of slow, sustained and systematic organisational work on a very large scale—to a new *phase*, a phase that became *objectively* essential with the outbreak of the first imperialist World War, which inaugurated *the era of social revolution*.

The chief leader and representative of the "Centre" is Karl Kautsky, the most outstanding authority in the Second International (1889-1914). Since August 1914, he has presented a picture of utterly bankrupt Marxism, of unheard-of spinelessness, and a series of the most wretched vacillations and betrayals. This Centrist tendency includes Kautsky, Haase, Ledebour, and the so-called "labour group" (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft*) in the Reichstag; in France it includes Longuët, Pressemane and the "*minoritaires*" (Mensheviks) in general; in England, Philip Snowden, Ramsay MacDonald and many other leaders of the Independent Labour Party, and a section of the British Socialist Party; Morris Hillquit and many others in the United States; Turati, Treves, Modigliani and others in Italy; Robert Grimm and others in Switzerland; Victor Adler and Co. in Austria; the party of the Organisation Committee,¹ Axelrod, Martov, Chkheidze, Tseretelli and others in Russia, and so forth.

It goes without saying that at times individual persons unconsciously drift from social-chauvinism to "Centrism," and *vice versa*. Every Marxist knows, however, that classes are distinct, even though individuals may move freely from one class to another; similarly, *currents* in political life are distinct, in spite of the fact that individuals drift freely from one current to another, and in spite of all attempts and efforts to *amalgamate* currents.

3) The third tendency, the true internationalists, is most closely represented by the "Zimmerwald Left." (We reprint as a supplement its manifesto of September 1915, in order that the reader may become acquainted in the original with the inception of this movement.²)

It is characterised mainly by its complete break with both

¹ I.e., the Mensheviks.—Ed.

² See Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol 18, p. 478.—Ed.

social-chauvinism and "Centrism," and by its relentless war against *its own* imperialist government and against *its own* imperialist bourgeoisie. Its principle is: "Our greatest enemy is at home." It wages a ruthless struggle against honeyed social-pacifist phrases (a social-pacifist is a Socialist in words and a bourgeois pacifist in deeds; bourgeois pacifists dream of an everlasting peace *without* the overthrow of the yoke and domination of capital) and against all *subterfuges* employed to deny the possibility, the appropriateness, the timeliness of a proletarian revolutionary struggle, of a proletarian socialist revolution *in connection* with the present war.

The most outstanding representative of this tendency in Germany is the Spartacus Group or the Group of the International, to which Karl Liebknecht belongs. Karl Liebknecht is one of the most celebrated representatives of this tendency and of the *new*, and genuine, proletarian International.

Karl Liebknecht called upon the workers and soldiers of Germany to *turn their guns* against *their own* government. Karl Liebknecht did that openly from the parliamentary tribune (the Reichstag). He then went out to a demonstration on Potsdamer Platz, one of the largest public squares in Berlin, distributing illegally printed proclamations announcing the slogan "Down with the government." He was arrested and sentenced to *hard labour*. He is now serving his term in a German penal prison, like *hundreds*, if not thousands, of other *genuine* German Socialists who have been imprisoned for opposing the war.

Karl Liebknecht in his speeches and letters mercilessly attacked not only the German Plekhanovs and Potresovs (Scheidemann, Legien, David and so forth), *but also the German Centrists*, the German Chkheidzes and Tseretellis (Kautsky, Haase, Ledebour and Co.).

Karl Liebknecht and his friend, Otto Rühle, two out of one hundred and ten deputies, violated discipline, destroyed the "unity" with the "Centre" and the chauvinists, and *went against all of them*. Liebknecht *alone* represents socialism, the proletarian cause, the proletarian revolution. The rest of German Social-Democracy, to quote the apt words of Rosa Luxemburg (also a member and one of the leaders of the Spartacus Group), is a "*stinking corpse*."

Another group of internationalists in deed in Germany is gathered around the Bremen paper *Arbeiterpolitik*.

Closest to the internationalists in deed are: in France, Lorient and his friends (Bourderon and Merrheim have degenerated to social-pacifism), as well as the Frenchman, Henri Guilbeaux, who publishes in Switzerland a paper called *Demain*; in England, the *Trade Unionist*, and some of the members of the British Socialist Party and of the Independent Labour Party (for instance, Russell Williams, who openly called for a break with the leaders who have betrayed socialism), the Scottish public-school teacher and Socialist, *MacLean*, who was sentenced to *hard labour* by the bourgeois government of England for his revolutionary fight against the war, and hundreds of British Socialists who are in jail for the same offence. They, and they alone, are internationalists *in deed*. In the United States, the Socialist Labour Party and the elements within the opportunist Socialist Party who in January 1917 began the publication of the paper *The Internationalist*; in Holland, the party of the "Tribunists," who publish the paper *Tribune* (Pannekoek, Herman Gorter, Wynkoop, and Henrietta Roland-Holst), which, although Centrist at Zimmerwald, has now joined our ranks; in Sweden, the party of the youth, or the Left, led by Lindhagen, Ture Nerman, Carlson, Ström and Z. Höglund, who at Zimmerwald was personally active in the organisation of the Zimmerwald Left, and who is now in prison for his revolutionary fight against the war; in Denmark, Trier and his friends, who have left the now purely bourgeois "Social-Democratic" Party, headed by the *minister*, Stauning; in Bulgaria, the "Tesniaki"; in Italy, the nearest are Constantino Lazzari, secretary of the party, and Serrati, editor of the central organ, *Avanti*; in Poland, Karl Radek, Hanecki and other leaders of the Social-Democrats united under the "District Administration," and Rosa Luxemburg, Tyszkó, and the other leaders of the Social-Democrats united under the "Central Administration"; in Switzerland, those Lefts who drew up the argument for the "referendum" (January 1917) directed against the social-chauvinists and the "Centre" of their *own* country, and who at the Zurich Cantonal Socialist Convention, held at Töss on February

11, 1917, introduced a consistently revolutionary resolution against the war; in Austria, the young Left-Wing friends of Friedrich Adler, who acted partly through the Karl Marx Club in Vienna, now closed by the extremely reactionary Austrian government, which is torturing Adler for his heroic though ill-considered attempt upon the life of a minister, and so on.

We are dealing here not with shades of opinion, which certainly exist even among the Lefts. We have here a *tendency*. The fact is that it is by no means easy to be an internationalist in deed during a frightful imperialist war. Such people are few; but it is on such people alone that the future of Socialism depends; they *alone are the leaders of the masses*, and not the corrupters of the masses.

The difference between the reformists and revolutionaries among the Social-Democrats and Socialists generally was objectively bound to undergo a change in the circumstances of an imperialist war. Those who confine themselves to "demanding" that the bourgeois governments should conclude peace or "ascertain the will of the peoples for peace" are virtually reformists. *For, objectively, the problem of war can be solved only in a revolutionary way.*

There is no way out of this war, no hope of a democratic, non-coercive peace and the liberation of the peoples from the burden of paying billions in interest to the capitalists, who have grown rich by the war, except by a revolution of the proletariat.

The most various reforms can be and must be demanded of the bourgeois governments, but without being guilty of Manilovism and reformism one cannot demand that people and classes who are entangled by the thousand threads of imperialist capital should *break* those threads. And unless they are broken, all talk of a war against war is idle and deceitful prattle.

The "Kautskians," the "Centre," are revolutionaries in word, and reformists in deed; they are internationalists in word and accomplices of the social-chauvinists in deed.

THE COLLAPSE OF THE ZIMMERWALD INTERNATIONAL--THE NEED FOR A THIRD INTERNATIONAL

17) From the very outset, the Zimmerwald International adopted a vacillating, "Kautskian," "Centrist" position, which immediately compelled the *Zimmerwald Left* to dissociate itself, to separate itself from the rest, and to issue its own manifesto (published in Switzerland in Russian, German and French).

The chief defect of the Zimmerwald International, and the cause of its *collapse* (for from a political and ideological point of view it has already collapsed), was its vacillation and indecision on the extremely important question, one of *crucial* practical significance, the question of breaking completely with the social-chauvinists and the old social-chauvinist International, headed by Vandervelde and Huysmans at the Hague (Holland).

It is not as yet known in Russia that the Zimmerwald majority are *really Kautskians*. Yet this is an important fact, one which cannot be ignored, and which is now generally known in Western Europe. Even that chauvinist, that extreme German chauvinist, Heilmann, editor of the ultra-chauvinist *Chemnitzer Volksstimme* and contributor to the ultra-chauvinist *Glocke* of Parvus (a "Social-Democrat," of course, and an ardent partisan of Social-Democratic "unity"), was compelled to acknowledge in the press that the "Centre," or "Kautskyism," and the *Zimmerwald majority* are one and the same thing.

This fact was definitely established at the end of 1916 and the beginning of 1917. In spite of the fact that social-pacifism was condemned by the Kienthal Manifesto, the *whole* Zimmerwald Right, the *entire* Zimmerwald majority, sank to social-pacifism: Kautsky and Co. in a series of utterances in January and February 1917; Bourderon and Merrheim, in France, who cast their votes *in unanimity* with the social-chauvinists for the pacifist resolutions of the Socialist Party (December 1916) and of the *Confédération Générale du Travail* (the national organisation of the French trade unions, also in December 1916); Turati and Co. in Italy, where the entire party took up a social-pacifist position, while Turati himself, in a speech delivered on December 17, 1916,

"slipped" (not by accident, of course) into *nationalist* phrases tending to present the imperialist war in a favourable light.

In January 1917, the chairman of the Zimmerwald and Kienthal Conferences, Robert Grimm, joined hands with the social-chauvinists of *his own* party (Greulich, Pflüger, Gustav Müller and others) against the true internationalists.

At two conferences of Zimmerwaldists of several countries, held in January and February 1917, this equivocal, double-faced behaviour of the Zimmerwald majority was formally stigmatised by the Left internationalists of several countries: by Münzenberg, secretary of the international youth organisation and editor of the excellent internationalist publication, *Die Jugendinternationale*; by Zinoviev, representative of the Central Committee of our Party; by Karl Radek, of the Polish Social-Democratic Party (the "District Administration") and by Hartstein, a German Social-Democrat and member of the Spartacus Group.

To the Russian proletariat much has been given. Nowhere on earth has the working class yet succeeded in developing as much revolutionary energy as in Russia. But to whom much has been given, of him much is demanded.

The Zimmerwald bog can no longer be tolerated. We must not, for the sake of the Zimmerwald "Kautskians," continue the semi-alliance with the chauvinist International of the Plekhanovs and Scheidemanns. We must break with this International immediately. We must remain in Zimmerwald *only* for purposes of information.

It is we who must found, and immediately, without delay, a *new*, revolutionary, proletarian International; or rather, we must not fear to acknowledge publicly that this new International is *already established* and working.

This is the International of those "internationalists in deed" whom I specifically enumerated above. They alone represent the revolutionary, internationalist masses, and not the corrupters of the masses.

True, there are few Socialists *of that type*; but let every Russian worker ask himself how many really conscious revolution-

aries there were in Russia on the eve of the February-March Revolution of 1917.

The question is not one of numbers, but of giving correct expression to the ideas and policy of the truly revolutionary proletariat. The essential thing is not to "proclaim" internationalism, but to remain an internationalist in deed, even when times are most trying.

Let us not deceive ourselves with hopes of agreements and international congresses. As long as the imperialist war lasts, international relations will be held in a vice by the military dictatorship of the imperialist bourgeoisie. If even the "republican" Milyukov, who is obliged to tolerate the "parallel government" of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, *did not allow* Fritz Platten, the Swiss Socialist, secretary of the party, an internationalist and participant in the Zimmerwald and Kienthal Conferences, to enter Russia in April 1917, although Platten is married to a Russian and was on a visit to his wife's relatives, and although he had taken part in the Revolution of 1905 in Riga, for which he had been confined in a Russian prison, had given bail to the tsarist government for his release and desired to have that bail returned—if the republican Milyukov could do such a thing in April 1917 in Russia, one may judge how much stock may be taken in the promises and offers, phrases and declarations of the bourgeoisie on the subject of peace without annexations, and so on.

And how about the arrest of Trotsky by the British government? How about the refusal to allow Martov to leave Switzerland, and the attempt to lure him to England, where Trotsky's fate awaited him?

Let us harbour no illusions. We must not deceive ourselves.

"To wait" for international congresses or conferences is simply to *betray* internationalism, since it has been shown that neither Socialists loyal to internationalism *nor even their letters* are allowed to enter here, even from Stockholm, despite the fact that this is possible and that an absolutely rigorous military censorship is being exercised.

Our Party must not "wait," but must immediately *found* a

Third International. Hundreds of Socialists imprisoned in Germany and England will thereupon heave a sigh of relief; thousands and thousands of German workers who are now organising strikes and demonstrations which are frightening that scoundrel and brigand, Wilhelm, will learn from *illegal* leaflets of our decision, of our fraternal confidence in Karl Liebknecht, and in him alone, of our decision to fight "revolutionary defencism" *right away*; they will read and be strengthened in their revolutionary internationalism.

To whom much has been given, of him much is demanded. There is no other land on earth as free as Russia is *now*. Let us make use of this freedom not to advocate support of the bourgeoisie, of bourgeois "revolutionary defencism," but to organise in a bold, honest, proletarian, Liebknecht way *the foundation for a Third International*, an International uncompromisingly hostile to the social-chauvinist traitors and to the vacillators of the "Centre."

18) After what has been said, one need not waste many words in explaining that a union of Social-Democrats in Russia is out of the question.

It is better to remain alone, like Liebknecht, *and that means remaining with the revolutionary proletariat*, than to entertain even for a moment any thought of a union with the party of the Organisation Committee, with Chkheidze and Tseretelli, who can tolerate a *bloc* with Potresov in *Rabochaya Gazeta*, who voted for the war loan in the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, and who have degenerated to "revolutionary defencism."

Let the dead bury their dead.

Whoever wants to *help* the vacillating must first stop vacillating himself.

A SCIENTIFICALLY SOUND NAME FOR OUR PARTY, ONE THAT WILL HELP TO CLARIFY PROLETARIAN CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

19) I am coming to the last point, the name of our Party. We must call ourselves a *Communist Party*—just as Marx and Engels called themselves Communists.

We must repeat that we are Marxists and that we take as our basis *The Communist Manifesto*, which has been perverted and betrayed by the Social-Democrats on two important points: 1) the workers have no country; "national defence" in an imperialist war is a betrayal of socialism; and 2) the Marxist doctrine of the state has been perverted by the Second International.

The term "Social-Democracy" is scientifically incorrect, as Marx frequently pointed out, in particular in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* in 1875, and as Engels reaffirmed in a more popular form in 1894. From capitalism mankind can pass directly only to socialism, i.e., to the social ownership of the means of production and the distribution of products according to the amount of work performed by each individual. Our Party looks farther ahead: socialism is bound to pass gradually into communism, upon the banner of which is inscribed the motto: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.

That is my first argument.

Here is the second: the second part of the name of our Party (Social-Democrats) is also scientifically incorrect. Democracy is but one form of the state, whereas we Marxists are opposed to all and every kind of state.

The leaders of the Second International (1889-1914), Messrs. Plekhanov, Kautsky and their like, have vulgarised and perverted Marxism.

The difference between Marxism and anarchism is that Marxism recognises *the necessity of the state* for the purpose of the transition to socialism; but (and here is where we differ from Kautsky and Co.) *not* a state of the type of the usual, parliamentary, bourgeois, democratic republic, but a state like the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Soviets of Workers' Deputies of 1905 and 1917.

My third argument: *the course of events*, the revolution, has *already actually* established in our country, although in a weak and embryonic form, this new type of "state," which is not a state in the true sense of the word.

This is *already* a matter of the practical action of the masses and not merely of theories of the leaders.

The state, in the true sense of the term, is the power exercised over the masses by detachments of armed men separated from the people.

Our new state, *now in process of being born*, is also a state, for we too need detachments of armed men; we too need the *strictest* order, and must *ruthlessly* and forcibly crush all attempts at either a tsarist or a Guchkov-bourgeois counter-revolution.

But our new state, *now in process of being born*, is no longer a state in the true sense of the term, for in many parts of Russia these detachments of armed men are *the masses themselves*, the entire people, and not merely privileged individuals, placed above and separated from the people, who in practice cannot be removed and replaced.

We must look forward, and not backward to the usual bourgeois type of democracy, which consolidated the rule of the bourgeoisie with the aid of the old, *monarchist*, organs of government—the police, the army and the bureaucracy.

We must look forward to the new democracy which is in process of being born, and which is already ceasing to be a democracy. For democracy means the rule of the people, whereas the armed people cannot rule over themselves.

The term democracy is not only scientifically incorrect when applied to a Communist Party; it has now, since March 1917, simply become a *blinker* covering the eyes of the revolutionary people and *preventing* them from boldly and freely, on their own initiative, building up the new: the Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and all other Deputies, as *the sole power* in the state and as the harbinger of the "withering away" of the state in every form.

My fourth argument: we must reckon with the actual situation in which Socialism finds itself internationally.

It is not what it was during the years 1871 to 1914, when Marx and Engels consciously reconciled themselves to the inaccurate, opportunist term "Social-Democracy." For *in those days*, after the defeat of the Paris Commune, history demanded slow organisational and educational work. Nothing else was possible. The anarchists were then (as they are now) fundamentally wrong not only theoretically, but also economically and politically. The

anarchists wrongly estimated the character of the times, for they did not understand the world situation: the worker of England corrupted by imperialist profits; the Commune defeated in Paris; the recent triumph of the bourgeois national movement in Germany (1871), the age-long sleep of semi-feudal Russia.

Marx and Engels gauged the times accurately; they understood the international situation; they realised that the approach to the beginning of the social revolution must be slow.

We, in our turn, must also understand the peculiarities and the tasks of the new era. Let us not imitate those sorry Marxists of whom Marx said: "I have sown dragons and have gathered a harvest of fleas."

The objective needs of capitalism grown into imperialism brought about the imperialist war. The war has brought mankind to the *brink of a precipice*, to the destruction of civilisation, to the brutalisation and destruction of countless millions of human beings.

There is *no* escape except in a proletarian revolution.

And at the very moment when such a revolution begins, when it is taking its first awkward, timorous, uncertain and groping steps, steps betraying too great a confidence in the bourgeoisie, at that moment the majority (that is the truth, that is a fact) of the "Social-Democratic" leaders, of the "Social-Democratic" parliamentarians and of the "Social-Democratic" papers—and these are the organs for influencing the masses—*betray* socialism and go over to the side of "their" national bourgeoisies.

The masses are confused, they have been put off the track, deceived by *these* leaders.

And are we to aid and abet that deception by retaining the old and antiquated Party name, which is as decayed as the Second International?

Let it be granted that "many" workers accept Social-Democracy in good faith; but it is time we knew how to distinguish the subjective from the objective.

Subjectively, such Social-Democratic workers are the loyal leaders of the proletarian masses.

Objectively, however, the world situation is such that the old

name of our Party *makes it easier* to fool the masses and *impedes* the onward march; for everywhere, in every paper, in every parliamentary group, the masses see *leaders*, i.e., the people whose voice carries farthest, whose acts are most prominent; yet they are all "also-Social-Democrats," they are all "for unity" with the betrayers of socialism, with the social-chauvinists; and they are all presenting for payment the old bills issued by "Social-Democracy." . . .

And what are the opposing arguments? We shall be confused with the anarchist-communists, we are told. . . .

Why are we not afraid of being confused with the social-nationalists, the social-liberals, or the radical-socialists, the foremost and most adroit bourgeois party in the French Republic in deceiving the masses?

We are told: The masses have grown used to the name, the workers have learnt to "love" their Social-Democratic Party.

That is the only argument. But it is an argument that disregards the teachings of Marxism, the tasks of the immediate morrow in the revolution, the objective position of world Socialism, the shameful collapse of the Second International, and the injury done to the practical cause by the pack of "also-Social-Democrats" who surround the proletarians.

It is an argument of routine, somnolence, and inertia.

But we are out to rebuild the world. We want to put an end to the imperialist World War, in which hundreds of millions of people and the interests of billions and billions of capital are involved, and which can be ended in a truly democratic peace only by the greatest proletarian revolution in the history of mankind.

Yet we are afraid of our own selves. We are loth to cast off the "dear old" soiled shirt. . . .

But it is time to cast off the soiled shirt and don a clean one.

April 23 (10), 1917

POLITICAL PARTIES IN RUSSIA AND THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT

THE following is an experiment in formulating, first, the more important questions, but also certain lesser questions, together with their answers, characterising the present situation in Russia and the way it is understood by the various parties.

1) *What are the chief groupings of political parties in Russia?*

A. (to the Right of the C.D.). The parties and groups to the Right of the Constitutional-Democrats.

B. (C.D.). The Constitutional-Democratic Party (Cadets, or the People's Freedom Party) and kindred groups.

C. (S.D. and S.R.). The Social-Democrats, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and kindred groups.

D. ("Bolsheviks"). The party which properly should be called the *Communist Party*, but which at present is named the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party united under the Central Committee or, popularly, the "Bolsheviks."

2) *What classes do these parties represent? What class standpoint do they express?*

A. (to the Right of the C.D.). The feudal landlords and the most backward sections of the bourgeoisie (of the capitalists).

B. (C.D.). The bourgeoisie as a whole, that is, the capitalist class, and the landlords who have become bourgeois, i.e., who have become capitalists.

C. (S.D. and S.R.). Small proprietors, small and middle peasants, the petty bourgeoisie, and that section of the workers which has come under the influence of the bourgeoisie.

D. ("Bolsheviks"). Class conscious proletarians, wage work-

ers and the allied poor section of the peasantry (semi-proletarians).

3) *What is their attitude towards socialism?*

A. (*to the Right of the C.D.*) and B. (*C.D.*). Unconditionally hostile, since socialism threatens the profits of the capitalists and landlords.

C. (*S.D. and S.R.*). For socialism, but it is too early to think of it or to take any practical measures for its realisation.

D. (*"Bolsheviks"*). For socialism. The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies must at once take every practicable and feasible measure for its realisation.¹

4) *What form of government do they want at present?*

A. (*to the Right of the C.D.*). A constitutional monarchy, the absolute power of the bureaucracy and the police.

B. (*C.D.*). A bourgeois parliamentary republic, i.e., the consolidation of the rule of the capitalists, while retaining the old bureaucracy and the police.

C. (*S.D. and S.R.*). A bourgeois parliamentary republic, with reforms for the workers and peasants.

D. (*"Bolsheviks"*). A republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants' and other Deputies. The abolition of the standing army and the police, to be replaced by the universally armed people; officials to be not only elected, but also subject to recall; their pay not to exceed that of a competent worker.

5) *What is their attitude towards the restoration of the Romanov monarchy?*

A. (*to the Right of the C.D.*). Favourable; but they act covertly and cautiously, for they are afraid of the people.

B. (*C.D.*). When the Guchkovs seemed to be a force, the Cadets were in favour of putting a brother or the son of Nicholas

¹ For the nature of these measures, see questions 20 and 22.

on the throne; but when the people began to seem a force, the Cadets became anti-monarchist.

C. (*S.D. and S.R.*) and D. (*"Bolsheviks"*). Unconditionally opposed to a monarchist restoration in any form.

6) *What is their attitude towards the seizure of power? What do they regard as order, and what as anarchy?*

A. (*to the Right of the C.D.*). If a tsar or some dashing general seizes power, that is an act of god, that is order. Everything else is anarchy.

B. (*C.D.*). If the capitalists seize power, even by force, that is order; to seize power against the capitalists would be anarchy.

C. (*S.D. and S.R.*). If the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and other Deputies seize power alone, that is a threat of anarchy. For the present, let the capitalists have the power, and the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies have the "Contact Commission."

D. (*"Bolsheviks"*). The entire power must be solely in the hands of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', Agricultural Labourers' and other Deputies. Propaganda, agitation and the organisation of millions upon millions of people must be entirely directed towards this end immediately.¹

7) *Should the Provisional Government be supported?*

A. (*to the Right of the C.D.*) and B. (*C.D.*). Unquestionably, since it is the only government possible at this moment which will protect the interests of the capitalists.

C. (*S.D. and S.R.*). Yes, but on condition that it carries out its agreement with the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and attends the meetings of the Contact Commission.

D. (*"Bolsheviks"*). No; let the capitalists support it. We must prepare the people for the sovereign and undivided power of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and other Deputies.

¹ Anarchy is the complete negation of state power, whereas the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies are *themselves* a state power.

8) *For a single power or a dual power?*

A. (*to the Right of the C.D.*). and B. (*C.D.*). For the sole power of the capitalists and landlords.

C. (*S.D. and S.R.*). For dual power. The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies to exercise "control" over the Provisional Government. It is dangerous to reflect as to whether control can be effective without power.

D. (*"Bolsheviks"*). For the sole power of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and other Deputies from top to bottom all over the country.

9) *Should a Constituent Assembly be summoned?*

A. (*to the Right of the C.D.*). No, for it might injure the landlords. Who knows, the peasants in the Constituent Assembly may decide that the landlords ought to be deprived of their estates.

B. (*C.D.*). Yes, but without fixing a date. As much time as possible should be spent in consulting with professors of law; for, in the first place, as Bebel said, jurists are the most reactionary people in the world; and, in the second place, the experience of all revolutions has shown that the cause of the freedom of the people is lost when it is entrusted to professors.

C. (*S.D. and S.R.*). Yes, and as soon as possible. A date must be appointed; we have already said so two hundred times at the meetings of the Contact Commission, and shall say so finally tomorrow, for the two hundred and first time.

D. (*"Bolsheviks"*). Yes, and as soon as possible. But there is only one way to assure its success and convocation, viz., to increase the number and *strengthen the power* of the Soviets of Workers', Peasants', and other Deputies, and to organise and *arm* the working class masses. That is the only guarantee.

10) *Does the state need the usual type of police and standing army?*

A. (*to the Right of the C.D.*) and B. (*C.D.*). They are most certainly necessary, for they are the only firm guarantee of the rule of the capitalists; and, as has been shown by the experience

of all countries, they, if necessary, greatly facilitate the return from a republic to a monarchy.

C. (*S.D. and S.R.*). On the one hand, they are perhaps not necessary. On the other hand, is not so radical a change premature? However, we shall raise the matter in the Contact Commission.

D. (*"Bolsheviks"*). Absolutely unnecessary. The universal arming of the people must be proceeded with everywhere immediately and unreservedly, and merged with the militia and the army. The capitalists must pay the workers for days served in the militia.

11) Does the state need a bureaucracy of the usual type?

A. (*to the Right of the C.D.*) and B. (*C.D.*). Most certainly. Nine-tenths of them are sons and brothers of the landlords and capitalists. They must continue to remain a privileged and, in practice, permanent body of people.

C. (*S.D. and S.R.*). It is hardly fitting to raise so hastily a question that was raised practically by the Paris Commune.

D. (*"Bolsheviks"*). Most certainly not. All officials and all and every kind of deputy must be subject not only to election, but also to recall at any time. Their pay must not exceed that of a competent workman. They must be replaced (gradually) by the people's militia and its detachments.

12) Should officers be elected by the soldiers?

A. (*to the Right of the C.D.*) and B. (*C.D.*). No. That would be detrimental to the landlords and capitalists. If the soldiers cannot be pacified otherwise, they must be temporarily promised this reform, but it must be withdrawn at the earliest possible moment.

C. (*S.D. and S.R.*). Yes, they should.

D. (*"Bolsheviks"*). Not only must they be elected, but every step of every officer and general must be supervised by persons specially elected for the purpose by the soldiers.

13) Is the arbitrary removal of their superiors by the soldiers desirable?

A. (*to the Right of the C.D.*) and B. (*C.D.*). Undoubtedly

harmful. Guchkov has already forbidden it. He has already threatened to use force. Guchkov must be supported.

C. (*S.D. and S.R.*). Desirable. But it is not clear whether they should be removed before the matter is taken up with the Contact Commission, or *vice versa*.

D. (*"Bolsheviks"*). Desirable and essential in every respect. The soldiers will obey and respect only elected authorities.

14) *For or against the present war?*

A. (*to the Right of the C.D.*) and B. (*C.D.*). Unquestionably for, because it brings untold profits to the capitalists and promises to consolidate their rule by disuniting the workers and setting them against one another. We shall deceive the workers by calling the war a war for national defence, the object of which is to dethrone Wilhelm.

C. (*S.D. and S.R.*). In general we are opposed to imperialist wars, but we are willing to be fooled, and are prepared to call the support given to an imperialist war waged by the imperialist government of Guchkov, Milyukov and Co. "revolutionary defencism."

D. (*"Bolsheviks"*). Absolutely against all imperialist wars and *all* bourgeois governments waging such wars, including our own Provisional Government; absolutely against "revolutionary defencism" in Russia.

15) *For or against the predatory international treaties concluded between the tsar, Great Britain, France, etc. (for the strangulation of Persia, the partition of China, Turkey, Austria, etc.)?*

A. (*to the Right of the C.D.*) and B. (*C.D.*). Absolutely and entirely for. At the same time, we must not publish these treaties, both because Anglo-French imperialist capital and its governments will not permit it, and because Russian capital cannot afford to reveal its shady affairs to the public.

C. (*S.D. and S.R.*). Against, but we still hope that with the aid of the Contact Commission and a series of "campaigns" among the masses, it may be possible to "influence" the capitalist government.

D. ("Bolsheviks"). Against. The whole point is to enlighten the masses as to the utter hopelessness of expecting anything in this respect from capitalist governments, and as to the necessity of the power being transferred to the proletariat and the poor peasants.

16) *For or against annexations?*

A. (to the Right of the C.D.) and B. (C.D.). If it is a question of annexations by the German capitalists and their brigand chief, Wilhelm, we are against. If by the British, we are not against, for they are "our" allies. If by our capitalists, who are forcibly retaining within the boundaries of Russia the peoples who were oppressed by the tsar, we are *in favour*; we do *not* call that annexation.

C. (S.D. and S.R.). Against annexations, but we still hope it will be possible to obtain even from the capitalist government a promise to renounce annexations.

D. ("Bolsheviks"). Against annexations. All promises on the part of capitalist governments to renounce annexations are a sheer fraud. There is only one method of exposing it, namely, to demand the liberation of the peoples oppressed by one's *own* capitalists.

17) *For or against the Liberty Loan?*

A. (to the Right of the C.D.) and B. (C.D.). Absolutely for, since it facilitates the conduct of the imperialist war, that is, a war to *determine* which group of capitalists shall rule the world.

C. (S.D. and S.R.). For, since our incorrect stand, "revolutionary defencism," forces us into this patent departure from internationalism.

D. ("Bolsheviks"). Against, for the war is an imperialist war, waged by capitalists, in alliance with capitalists and in the interests of capitalists.

18) *For or against the people's will to peace being ascertained by the capitalist government?*

A. (to the Right of the C.D.) and B. (C.D.). For, since the experience of the French republican social-chauvinists was an excellent proof that the people can be fooled in this way; we can say anything you like, but in practice we shall hold fast to the spoils seized from the Germans (their colonies), while depriving the German robbers of the spoils *they* have seized.

C. (S.D. and S.R.). For, since generally we have not yet relinquished a good many of the unfounded hopes placed by the petty bourgeoisie in the capitalists.

D. ("Bolsheviks"). Against, for class conscious workers place *no hopes whatever* in the capitalists, and it is our task to open the eyes of the masses to the futility of such hopes.

19) *Must all monarchies be abolished?*

A. (to the Right of the C.D.) and B. (C.D.). No; the British, Italian and Allied monarchies generally must not be abolished, but only the German, Austrian, Turkish, and Bulgarian, since victory over them will multiply our profits.

C. (S.D. and S.R.). A certain "rotation" must be observed, and in any case we should begin with Wilhelm; as to the Allied monarchies, it would be better to wait a bit.

D. ("Bolsheviks"). No rotation can be established for revolutions. We must help *only* the revolutionaries *in deed*, to abolish *all* monarchies in all countries without exception.

20) *Shall the peasants seize all the landlords' estates immediately?*

A. (to the Right of the C.D.) and B. (C.D.). By no means. We must await the Constituent Assembly. Shingarev has already explained that when the capitalists seize power from the tsar that is a great and glorious revolution; but when the peasants seize the land from the landlords, that is arrogation of power. Conciliation commissions must be appointed on which landlords and peasants shall be equally represented, while the chairmen shall be officials, that is, drawn from the capitalists and landlords.

C. (S.D. and S.R.). Better if the peasants waited for the Constituent Assembly.

D. ("Bolsheviks"). All land must be taken over immediately. Order must be strictly maintained by the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies. The output of bread and meat must be increased, the soldiers better fed. Injury to livestock, implements, etc., must in no case be permitted.

21) *Can we leave the disposal of the land and the management of rural affairs generally solely to the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies?*

A. (to the Right of the C.D.) and B. (C.D.). The landlords and capitalists are generally opposed to the full and sole power of the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies in the villages; but, if such Soviets are unavoidable, then better confine ourselves to them alone, for rich peasants are also capitalists.

C. (S.D. and S.R.). Better for the present, perhaps, to confine ourselves to the Soviets, although Social-Democrats do not deny "in principle" the necessity of a separate organisation for the agricultural wage workers.

D. ("Bolsheviks"). We must not confine ourselves solely to the general Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, for the wealthy peasants are also capitalists and will always be inclined to injure or deceive the agricultural workers, day labourers, and poor peasants. It is necessary at once to form separate organisations for these latter sections of the rural population; both within the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies and as separate Soviets of deputies from the agricultural workers.

22) *Shall the people take over the largest and most powerful capitalist monopolies, the banks, the syndicates of manufacturers, etc.?*

A. (to the Right of the C.D.) and B. (C.D.). By no means, since that might injure the landlords and capitalists.

B. (S.D. and S.R.). Generally speaking, we are in favour of transferring such organisations to the entire people, but it is premature to think of or prepare for it just now.

D. ("Bolsheviks"). We must at once prepare the Soviets of Workers' Deputies, the Soviets of Deputies of Bank Employees, etc., to proceed to the adoption of feasible and practicable measures for

the merging of all the banks into one single national bank, to be followed by the establishment of the control of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies over the banks and syndicates, and then by their nationalisation, *i.e.*, their transfer to the possession of the whole people.

23) *What kind of Socialist International for establishing and effecting the fraternal union of the workers of all countries is now needed by the peoples?*

A. (to the Right of the C.D.) and B. (C.D.). Generally speaking, any Socialist International is harmful and dangerous to the capitalists and landlords; but if the German Plekhanov, that is, Scheidemann, comes to an agreement with the Russian Scheidemann, that is, Plekhanov, and if they detect in each other vestiges of a Socialist conscience, then it were perhaps better for us capitalists to hail *such* an International and to hail Socialists who support their *own* respective governments.

C. (S.D. and S.R.). We need a Socialist International that will unite everybody: the Scheidemanns, the Plekhanovs and the "Centrists," *i.e.*, those who vacillate between social-chauvinism and internationalism. The greater the hotch-potch, the greater the "unity." Long live the great Socialist unity!

D. ("Bolsheviks"). The peoples need only such an International as will unite the real revolutionary workers, who are capable of putting an end to this frightful, criminal slaughter of the peoples and of delivering humanity from the yoke of capital. Only people (groups, parties, etc.) like the German Socialist Karl Liebknecht, now in prison, only people who are resolutely fighting their *own* government, their *own* bourgeoisie, their *own* social-chauvinists, their *own* "Centre," can and must immediately establish the International which the peoples need.

24) *Should fraternisation at the front between soldiers of the belligerent countries be encouraged?*

A. (to the Right of the C.D.) and B. (C.D.). No, that is bad for the interests of the landlords and capitalists, since it might accelerate the liberation of humanity from their yoke.

C. (*S.D. and S.R.*). Yes, it is desirable. But we are not fully convinced that one should proceed to encourage such fraternisation immediately in all the belligerent countries.

D. ("*Bolsheviks*"). Yes, it is desirable and essential. It is absolutely essential to encourage immediately attempts at fraternisation between the soldiers of both warring groups in all the belligerent countries.

25) *What colour flag would best correspond with the nature and character of the various political parties?*

A. (*to the Right of the C.D.*). Black, for they are the real Black Hundreds.

B. (*C.D.*). Yellow, for that is the international banner of workers who serve capitalism by choice and not by compulsion.

C. (*S.D. and S.R.*). Pink, for their whole policy is a rose-water one.

D. ("*Bolsheviks*"). Red, for that is the standard of the international proletarian revolution.

* * *

This pamphlet was written in the middle (at the beginning) of April 1917. To the question whether it is out of date now, after May 19 (6), 1917, after the formation of the "new," the coalition government, my answer is: No, for the Contact Commission has not really disappeared, it has merely moved into another chamber, one it shares in common with the gentlemen of the cabinet. The fact that the Chernovs and the Tseretellis have moved into another chamber has not changed their policy, nor the policy of their parties.

April 1917

REPORT ON THE CURRENT SITUATION

*Delivered at the April Conference of the Russian Social-Democratic
Labour Party, May 7 (April 24), 1917*

COMRADES, a discussion of the present political situation obliges me to cover an exceedingly broad field, which, to my mind, falls into three parts: first, an examination of the political situation here in Russia and our attitude towards the government and towards the existing dual power; secondly, our attitude towards the war; and, thirdly, the present international position of the working class movement, a position which has brought it (all over the world) face to face with a socialist revolution.

Some of the points require, I think, only brief discussion. Besides, I shall submit to you a draft of a resolution covering all these questions; only I must say that, owing to the extreme paucity of forces at our disposal, and owing also to the political crisis prevailing here, in Petrograd, we were unable not only to discuss the resolution, but even to transmit it beforehand to the local organisations. I therefore repeat that these are only tentative drafts, intended to facilitate the labours of the commission and to enable it to concentrate on a few, most essential questions.

I shall begin with the first question. If I am not mistaken, the Moscow Conference adopted the same resolution as the Petrograd City Conference [*Voices*: "With amendments."]. I have not seen these amendments and am unable to judge. But since the Petrograd resolution was published in *Soldatskaya Pravda*,¹ I shall take it for granted, if there are no objections, that everybody is acquainted with it. I submit this resolution to the present All-Russian Conference as a draft.

¹*Soldier's Truth*—a popular daily paper published in 1917 by the Bolshevik military organisation in Petrograd.—Ed.

The majority of the parties forming the petty-bourgeois *bloc* that dominates the Petrograd Soviet represent our policy, in distinction to their own, as a policy of hasty measures. The distinguishing feature of our policy is that we demand first and foremost a precise class analysis of the current situation. The fundamental sin of the petty-bourgeois *bloc* is that its eloquent phrases conceal from the people the true class character of the government.

If the Moscow comrades have any amendments to make, they might read them now.

[Lenin reads the resolution of the Petrograd City Conference on the attitude towards the Provisional Government.]

Whereas:

1) the Provisional Government, in its class character, is the organ of landlord and bourgeois domination;

2) the Provisional Government, and the classes it represents, are indissolubly bound economically and politically to Russian and Anglo-French imperialism;

3) the Provisional Government is not carrying out fully even the programme it has itself announced, and to the extent that it does, it does so only under the pressure of the revolutionary proletariat and partly of the petty bourgeoisie;

4) the forces of the bourgeois and landlord counter-revolution, now in the process of organisation, have already under cover of the Provisional Government and with its obvious connivance launched an attack on revolutionary democracy;

5) the Provisional Government is delaying the appointment of the elections to the Constituent Assembly, is preventing the universal arming of the people, is resisting the transfer of the whole land to the people, is foisting upon the latter the landlords' method of settling the agrarian question, is blocking the introduction of an eight-hour working day, is conniving at the counter-revolutionary propaganda conducted in the army by Guchkov and Co., is organising the commanding officers of the army against the soldiers and so on . . .

I have read the first part of the resolution, which contains a class description of the Provisional Government. The differences between this and the resolution of the Moscow comrades, as far as one can judge from the text of that resolution, are hardly of an essential nature; but a general description of the Provisional Government as counter-revolutionary I would consider incorrect. If we speak generally, we must specify which revolution we mean. It cannot be said of the bourgeois revolution, for that revolution is already completed. It is premature to say it of the proletarian-

peasant revolution, for we cannot be sure that the peasants will necessarily go farther than the bourgeoisie. To express confidence in the peasantry, particularly now that they have turned towards imperialism and defensism, i.e., to supporting the war, is in my judgment unsound. At the present moment the peasantry has arrived at several agreements with the Cadets. That is why I regard this point in the resolution of the Moscow comrades as politically incorrect. We want the peasants to go farther than the bourgeoisie, we want them to take the land from the landlords; but at present we can say nothing definite about their future conduct.

We carefully avoid the words "revolutionary democracy." We may use this expression when speaking of a government attack. But at the present moment this phrase covers a huge fraud, for it is very difficult to distinguish the classes that have become blended in this chaos. Our task is to help those who are lagging behind. To us, the Soviets are important not as a form; what is important is the classes the Soviets represent. Protracted work is therefore necessary in order to enlighten the class consciousness of the proletariat. . . .

[Resumes the reading of the resolution.]

6) the government, nevertheless, at the present moment enjoys the confidence of and, to a certain extent, has a direct understanding with the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which at present represents an undoubted majority of workers and soldiers, i.e., peasants;

7) every step taken by the Provisional Government in the realm of both domestic and foreign policy is bound to open the eyes both of the urban and rural proletarians and semi-proletarians and of wide sections of the petty bourgeoisie to the true nature of this government;

The Conference resolves that:

1) in order to achieve the transfer of the entire state power to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, or to other bodies directly expressing the will of the people, protracted work is required to enlighten the proletarian class consciousness and to rally the urban and rural proletarians against the vacillations of the petty bourgeoisie; for it is only work of this nature that will assure the successful advance of the whole revolutionary people; that

2) such activity will require that comprehensive work be carried on within the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, that their number be increased, that their power be strengthened and that the proletarian internationalist groups of our Party be consolidated within the Soviets; and that

3) we must more effectively organise our Social-Democratic forces, in order that the new wave of the revolutionary movement may proceed under the banner of revolutionary Social-Democracy.

Here we have the whole crux of our policy. The petty bourgeoisie is at present wavering, and is concealing its wavering by talk of revolutionary democracy. Against these waverings we must put up a proletarian line. The counter-revolutionaries wish to frustrate it by premature action. Our task is to increase the number of Soviets, to strengthen their power and to consolidate our Party.

The Moscow comrades have added the demand for control to Point 3. This control is represented by Chkheidze, Steklov, Tseretelli, and the other leaders of the petty-bourgeois *bloc*. Control without power is a sheer empty phrase. Can I control England? You must seize her fleet in order to control her. I can understand the uneducated mass of workers and soldiers naively and unintelligently believing in control. It is sufficient, however, to ponder over the fundamental aspects of control in order to realise that such a belief is a retreat from the basic principles of the class struggle. What is control? If I write a note or a resolution, they will write a counter-resolution. In order to control, one must have power. If this is not understood by the broad masses of the petty-bourgeois *bloc*, we must have the patience to explain it to them, but under no circumstances must we tell them an untruth. And if I obscure this fundamental condition by the demand for control, I tell an untruth and play into the hands of the capitalists and the imperialists. "You may control me if you please, but I shall have the guns. You can have all the control you like," they say. They know that at the present moment the people cannot be denied. Control without power is a petty-bourgeois phrase that blocks the march and development of the Russian revolution. That is why I object to the third point of the Moscow comrades.

As regards this unique interplay of two powers, in which the Provisional Government, devoid of power, guns, soldiers and armed masses of people, rests on the Soviets, which, trusting so far in promises, are pursuing a policy of backing these promises—if you wish to take part in this game, you will meet with disaster. We must keep out of this game; we shall continue our work of explaining to the proletariat the unsoundness of such a policy, and at every step events will prove that we are right. We are at present in a minority; the masses do not trust us yet. We can wait; they

will come over to our side when the government exposes itself. The vacillation of the government may repel them, and they will rush to our side; whereupon, on the strength of the new relation of forces, we shall say: Our time has come.

I now pass to the question of the war; this question united us practically in the stand we took against the loan, the attitude towards which immediately and clearly revealed how the political forces were aligned. As *Rech*¹ stated, everybody except the *Yedinstvo* is wavering; the whole of the petty-bourgeois mass is for the loan—with reservations. The capitalists pull a wry face, but they pocket the resolution with a smile, saying: "You may do the talking, but we will do the acting." All over the world those who are now voting for loans are known as social-chauvinists.

I shall proceed to read the resolution on the war. It consists of three parts: first, an analysis of the war from the standpoint of its class significance; secondly, the revolutionary defensism of the masses, something that cannot be found in any country; thirdly, how to end the war.

Many of us, myself included, have had occasion to address the people, particularly the soldiers; and it seems to me that when everything is explained to them from the class point of view, what they are most hazy about in our position is how exactly we intend to end the war, how we consider it possible to end it. The masses are in a maze of misapprehension, there is an absolute lack of understanding of our position and therefore we must here express ourselves in particularly popular language.

[*Reads the draft of the resolution on the war.*]

The present war is an imperialist war on the part of both groups of belligerent powers, i.e., it is being waged by capitalists for the sake of domination over the world, for the division of the spoils of the capitalists, for profitable markets for finance and bank capital, and for the strangling of weak nationalities.

The transfer of state power in Russia from Nicholas II to the government of Guchkov, Lvov, and others, a government of the landlords and capitalists, did not, and could not, alter this class character and significance of the war in relation to Russia.

The fact that the new government is carrying on the same imperialist,

¹ *Speech*—the Cadet Party newspaper.—*Ed.*

i.e., annexatory and predatory, war was particularly revealed by the following circumstance: the new government not only did not make public the secret treaties concluded between the former Tsar Nicholas II and the capitalist governments of Great Britain, France, etc., but formally endorsed these treaties. This was done without consulting the will of the people and with the obvious purpose of deceiving them, for it is well known that these secret treaties concluded by the late tsar are utterly predatory, promising the Russian capitalists the plunder of China, Persia, Turkey, Austria, etc.

For this reason the proletarian party, unless it breaks completely with internationalism, *i.e.*, with the fraternal solidarity of the workers of all lands in their struggle against the yoke of capital, cannot support either the present war, or the present government, or its loans, no matter in what grandiloquent terms these loans may be described.

Nor can any confidence be placed in the promise of the present government to renounce annexations, *i.e.*, the conquest of foreign countries, or to renounce the forcible retention of nationalities within the boundaries of Russia.

For, in the first place, the capitalists, enmeshed by thousands of threads of Russian and Anglo-French bank capital, and engaged in protecting the interests of capital, cannot renounce annexations in the present war without at the same time ceasing to be capitalists, without renouncing the profits on the billions invested in loans, in concessions, in war industries, etc. In the second place, the new government, having renounced annexations in order to deceive the people, declared through the mouth of Milyukov (in Moscow on April 22, 1917) that it does not renounce annexations. Finally, as was exposed by *Dyelo Naroda*,¹ a newspaper in which the minister Kerensky collaborates, Milyukov has not even sent abroad his statement concerning the renunciation of annexations.

The Conference therefore warns the people against the empty promises of the capitalists and declares that one must strictly distinguish between a verbal renunciation of annexations and a renunciation of annexations in actual fact, *i.e.*, the immediate publication of all the secret predatory treaties and of all documents pertaining to foreign policy, and immediate measures for the complete liberation of the nationalities which the capitalist class, continuing the policy of the former Tsar Nicholas II so disgraceful to our people, is oppressing, keeping forcibly bound to Russia, or maintaining in a state of inequality.

The second half of this part of the resolution deals with the promises made by the government. For Marxists this section is perhaps superfluous, but it is important for the people. We must therefore supplement it by explaining why we have no faith in these promises and why we must not trust the government. The promise of the present government to abandon its imperialist policy deserves no credence. Our line here must not be to say that we demand that the government publish the treaties. That would

¹ *People's Cause*—a newspaper published in 1917 by the Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party.—Ed.

be a delusion. To demand this of a capitalist government would be equivalent to demanding the exposure of commercial swindling. Since we maintain that it is necessary to renounce annexations and indemnities, we must indicate how this is to be done; and if we are asked who can do it, our answer will be that this measure is essentially a revolutionary one, and that it can be effected only by the revolutionary proletariat. Otherwise these promises are empty promises made by the capitalists in order to lead the people by the nose.

[Continues reading the draft resolution.]

So-called "revolutionary defencism," which in Russia has infected all the Narodnik parties (Narodni-Socialists, Trudoviki and Socialist-Revolutionaries) and the opportunist party of the Menshevik Social-Democrats (the Organisation Committee, Chkheidze, Tseretelli, etc.), as well as the majority of unaffiliated revolutionaries, in its class character, on the one hand, represents the interests and the standpoint of the petty bourgeoisie, the small proprietors and the wealthy peasants, who, like the capitalists, derive profits from the oppression of weak nations; and, on the other, is a result of the deception practised on the masses by the capitalists, who are withholding from publication the secret treaties and are confining themselves to promises and rhetorical phrases.

We must admit that a very large number of the "revolutionary defencists" are honest, i.e., they *really do not* desire annexations, conquests and the oppression of weak nations, and are *really* striving for a democratic and non-oppressive peace between *all* the belligerent countries. This must be admitted because the class position of the proletarians and the semi-proletarians of town and country (i.e., of people who earn their livelihood wholly or partly by selling their labour power to the capitalists) is such that these classes are not materially interested in the profits of the capitalists.

Therefore the Conference, recognising that concessions to "revolutionary defencism" are absolutely inadmissible and would signify in practice a complete departure from internationalism and socialism, at the same time declares that as long as the Russian capitalists and their Provisional Government confine themselves to threatening violent measures against the people (for instance, Guchkov's notorious decree threatening the soldiers with penalties for the arbitrary removal of superiors), and as long as the capitalists do not actually resort to violence against the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', Agricultural Labourers' and other Deputies, which organise themselves freely and elect and remove all public authorities—so long will our Party preach abstention from violence in general, and combat the profound and fatal error of "revolutionary defencism" exclusively by methods of comradely persuasion and by pointing out the truth that the attitude of uncritical confidence on the part of the masses towards the government of the capitalists, who are the bitterest enemies of peace and socialism, is in Russia today the greatest obstacle to a speedy conclusion of the war.

A section of the petty bourgeoisie is materially interested in the policy of the capitalists—of that there can be no doubt—and therefore the proletarian party can now place no hopes in a community of interests with the peasantry. We are striving to win the peasantry over to our side, but the peasantry to a certain extent consciously sides with the capitalists.

There is no doubt whatever that, as a class, the proletariat and semi-proletariat have no material interest in the war. They are under the influence of tradition and deceit. They still lack political experience. Hence, our task is one of prolonged explanation. We do not make the slightest concession on matters of principle, but we cannot approach them as we approach the social-chauvinists. These elements of the population have never been Socialists, they have not the slightest inkling of socialism and are just awakening to political life. But their class consciousness is growing and broadening with extraordinary rapidity. We must know how to adapt our explanations to them, and that is a most difficult thing, particularly for a party that but yesterday was underground.

Some may ask: Have we not repudiated our own principles? We advocated the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war—are we not going back on ourselves? But the first civil war in Russia has ended; we are now passing to a second war—a war between imperialism and the armed people. In this transitional period, as long as the armed force is in the hands of the soldiers, as long as Milyukov and Guchkov have not resorted to violence, this civil war, as far as we are concerned, turns into peaceful, prolonged, and patient class propaganda. If we speak of civil war before people have come to realise its necessity, we shall certainly be guilty of Blanquism. We are for civil war, but only when it is waged by a class conscious of itself. Only he who is known to the people as a despot can be overthrown. But there are no despots now: the guns and rifles are in the hands of the soldiers, and not the capitalists; the capitalists are getting their way now not by violence, but by fraud. To cry out against violence now is nonsense. One must be able to regard matters from the Marxist standpoint, which says that the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war is based on objective and not on subjective factors.

We discard this slogan for the time being, but only for the time being. It is the soldiers and the workers who are in possession of the arms now, not the capitalists. As long as the government has not started war, our propaganda is peaceful.

The government would like the first incautious step towards open action to be made by us, for that would be to its advantage. It is exasperated because our Party has issued the slogan for a peaceful demonstration. We must not cede one iota of our principles to the petty bourgeoisie, who are awaiting developments. No error could be more dangerous for the proletarian party than to base its tactics on subjective desires where organisation is required. We cannot assert that the majority is with us; what is required in this case is mistrust, mistrust and mistrust. To base our proletarian tactics on this is to doom them to failure.

The third point deals with the question of how to end the war. The Marxist point of view is well known; the difficulty is to present it to the masses in the clearest possible form. We are not pacifists and cannot renounce revolutionary war. Wherein does a revolutionary war differ from a capitalist war? Chiefly by the class that has an interest in the war and by the policy that the interested class pursues in the war. . . . When we address the masses, we must give them concrete answers. First, then, how can one distinguish a revolutionary war from a capitalist war? The rank-and-file masses do not grasp the distinction, do not realise that the distinction is one of classes. We must not confine ourselves to theory, but must demonstrate in practice that we can wage a truly revolutionary war only when the proletariat is in power. It seems to me that by putting the matter thus we give a clearer answer to the question of what the nature of the war is and who is waging it.

Pravda has published the draft of a manifesto addressed to the soldiers of all the belligerent countries. We have information that fraternisation is going on at the front, although still in a more or less haphazard form. What fraternisation lacks is a conscious political idea. The soldiers have come to feel instinctively that action must come from below; the class instinct of people in a revolutionary mood has suggested to them that this is the only true path. But this is not enough for revolution. We wish to give a

clear-cut political answer. In order to end the war, the power must pass into the hands of the revolutionary class. I would suggest that an appeal to the soldiers of all the warring countries be drawn up in the name of the Conference and published in all languages. If, instead of the stock phrases regarding peace conferences, 50 per cent of the delegates to which are secret or avowed agents of the imperialist governments, we broadcast this appeal, it will bring us to our goal a thousand times quicker than all these peace conferences. We refuse to have any dealings with the German Plekhanovs. When our train was crossing Germany, these gentlemen, the social-chauvinists, the German Plekhanovs, tried to clamour into our car, but we told them that we would not allow a single Socialist of them to enter our car, and that if they did enter there would be a terrific row. Had a man like Karl Liebknecht been permitted to see us, we should certainly have talked matters over with him. When we issue our manifesto to the toilers of all countries, and in it give a definite answer to the question of how to end the war, when the soldiers read our answer, an answer presenting a political solution to the war, then fraternisation will make a tremendous stride forward. This we must do in order to elevate fraternisation from an instinctive revulsion to the horror of the war to a clear political understanding of how to end it.

I now pass to the third question, *i.e.*, the analysis of the present political situation with reference to the position of the international labour movement and the condition of international capitalism. When discussing imperialism from the point of view of Marxism, it is absurd to dwell on the conditions in one single country, when all the capitalist countries are so closely bound together. And this bond is immeasurably stronger now, during the war. All humanity has been kneaded into one bloody lump, and there is no escaping from it separately. Although there are countries more and less advanced, the present war has bound them all together by so many threads that for any one separate country to try to escape from the tangle is impossible and futile.

We are all agreed that power must be in the hands of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. But what will they be able to do, and what ought they to do, if the power passes to them,

i.e., into the hands of the proletarians and semi-proletarians? The situation becomes an involved and difficult one. When we speak of the transfer of power, we are confronted with a danger that has played an important part in previous revolutions, namely, that the revolutionary class will not know what to do with the power after it has gained it. History knows many cases of revolutions that collapsed for this reason. The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the network of which has spread all over Russia, are now in the centre of the revolution; but it seems to me that we have not sufficiently studied or understood them. If they took the power into their hands, they would not constitute a state in the ordinary sense of the term. The world has never yet seen such a state functioning for any considerable length of time, but the world working class movement has been shaping towards such a state. It would be a state of the type of the Paris Commune. A power of that kind is a dictatorship, *i.e.*, it rests not on law and not on the formal will of the majority, but on direct and open force. Force is the instrument of power. How, then, will the Soviets apply that power? Will they revert to the old method of governing by police? Will they carry on the government by means of the old organs of power? This, in my opinion, they cannot do. At any rate, they will be faced with the direct problem of creating a state that is not a bourgeois state. I have, addressing Bolsheviks, compared this state to the Paris Commune, bearing in mind that the latter destroyed the old organs of government and replaced them by perfectly new ones, which were the direct and immediate organs of the workers. I am blamed for having used at this moment a word that frightens the capitalists exceedingly, for they have begun to interpret it as a desire to introduce socialism immediately. But I used it only in the sense of the replacement of the old organs by new, proletarian organs. Marx regarded that as an enormous advance on the part of the world proletarian movement. The question of the social tasks of the proletariat is for us of tremendous practical importance, first, because we are at the present moment bound up with all the other countries, and it is impossible to free ourselves from this tangle, that is to say, the proletariat will either free itself as a whole or it will be crushed; secondly, the Soviets of Workers' and

Soldiers' Deputies are a fact. No one can doubt that they have spread over the whole of Russia, that they are a state power and that there can be no other state power. That being so, we must have a clear conception of how the Soviets are to use that power. It is asserted that this power is the same as that in France or America, but there is nothing like it in these countries; such a direct power does not exist in these countries.

The resolution on the present political situation consists of three parts. The first defines the objective situation created by the imperialist war, the situation into which world capitalism has fallen; the second deals with the condition of the international proletarian movement, and the third with the tasks of the Russian working class, should the power pass into its hands. In the first part I formulate the conclusion that capitalism during the present war has developed beyond its pre-war stage. It now controls whole branches of production. As far back as 1891, *i.e.*, twenty-seven years ago, when the Germans adopted their Erfurt programme, Engels maintained that capitalism could no longer be regarded as planless. That idea is antiquated; as soon as there are trusts, planlessness ceases. The development of capitalism has made gigantic strides, particularly in the twentieth century, and the war has done more than had been done in twenty-five years. State control of industry has advanced not only in Germany, but also in England. Monopoly in general has evolved into state monopoly. Objective conditions show that the war has accelerated the development of capitalism, which advanced from capitalism to imperialism, from monopoly to state control. All this has brought the socialist revolution nearer and has created the objective conditions for it. Thus the course of the war has brought the socialist revolution nearer.

Before the war England was the freest country in the world—a point always stressed by politicians of the Cadet type. There was freedom in England, because there was no revolutionary movement. But the war immediately changed all that. In a country where for decades there had not been a single instance of an attempt upon the liberty of the Socialist press, a typically tsarist censorship was at once established, and the prisons were filled with Socialists.

During the course of centuries the capitalists of England had learnt to rule the people without the use of force. If they have now resorted to force, it means that they have come to feel that the revolutionary movement is growing and that there is no other course. When we declared that Liebknecht represented the masses, although he was alone and opposed to him were a hundred German Plekhanovs, we were told that this was utopian, that it was an illusion. Yet anyone who attended workingmen's meetings abroad knows that the sympathy of the masses for Liebknecht is an undeniable fact. His bitterest opponents had to dissemble when they faced the masses; if they did not pretend to be his supporters, they at least did not dare to say anything against him. And matters have now gone still further. There are now mass strikes; fraternisation is going on at the front. To indulge in prophecies in this respect would be the height of folly, but that sympathy with the International is growing, that the revolutionary ferment has begun in the German army—these are facts, facts that indicate that the revolution there is maturing.

What, then, are the tasks of the revolutionary proletariat? The main defect and the main error in all Socialist discussions is that the matter is put in too general a form—the transition to socialism. What we should discuss is concrete steps and measures. Some of them are ripe, others are not. We are in a period of transition. We have created forms that patently differ from the forms of bourgeois states. The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies are a form of state without parallel. This form represents the first steps towards socialism, and is inevitable at the inception of a socialist society. This is a fact of decisive importance. The Russian revolution created the Soviets. No bourgeois country in the world has, or can have, such state institutions, and no socialist revolution can function with any other form of state power. The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies must take power not for the purpose of creating an ordinary bourgeois republic, nor for the purpose of an immediate transition to socialism. That is impossible. For what purpose, then? They must take power in order to accomplish the first concrete steps towards the transition to socialism, steps that can and must be taken. In a case like this fear is

our deadliest enemy. The masses must be taught that these steps must be taken immediately, otherwise the power of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies becomes devoid of meaning and will give the people nothing.

I shall now attempt to answer the question of what concrete measures we can propose to the people without going contrary to our Marxist convictions.

Why do we desire the transfer of power to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies?

The first measure the Soviets must accomplish is the nationalisation of the land. It is a measure of which all peoples are speaking. It is said that this is an utterly utopian measure; yet everybody comes to it, for landownership in Russia is so entangled that there is no solution except removing all boundaries and making all the land the property of the state. Private ownership of land must be abolished. This is the task facing us, for the majority of the people are for it. To accomplish this, we need the Soviets. It is a measure that cannot be effected with the aid of the old government bureaucracy.

The second measure. We cannot advocate the "introduction" of socialism—that would be sheer nonsense. We must preach socialism. The majority of the population of Russia consists of peasants, of petty proprietors, who cannot even conceive of socialism. But what objection can they have to there being a bank in every village which would enable them to improve their husbandry? They can have no objection to that. We must preach these practical measures to the peasants and firmly imbue them with the conviction that they are indispensable.

The sugar syndicate is a different matter—that already exists. Our proposal here must be eminently practical. These fully developed syndicates must be handed over to the state. If the Soviets wish to assume power, it must be only for such ends. There is no other reason why they should assume power. The matter may be stated thus: either the Soviets develop, or they die an inglorious death, as was the case with the Paris Commune. If it is a bourgeois republic that is wanted, the Cadets can manage that just as well.

I shall conclude by referring to a speech that made a very strong impression on me. A certain coal miner delivered a remarkable speech, in which, without using a single bookish phrase, he related how they had made the revolution. They were not concerned with the question of whether or not they should have a president. When they seized the mine, the question that interested him was how to keep the cables intact so that production might not be interrupted. Then came the question of bread, which they lacked. Here too they agreed how it was to be obtained. Now, this is a real programme of revolution, not one derived from books. This is the real seizure of power locally.

Nowhere has the bourgeoisie so consolidated itself as in Petrograd. Here the capitalists hold the power. But throughout the country the peasants, without entertaining any socialist plans, are adopting purely practical measures. I consider that this programme of the revolutionary movement alone points the true path of the revolution. These measures, we hold, must be carried out with the greatest caution and circumspection. But only these measures must be carried out; only in their direction must we look. There is no other way. Otherwise, the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies will be dispersed and will perish ingloriously. But if the power is really in the hands of the revolutionary proletariat, it will be solely in order to advance. And to advance means to take concrete measures, and not merely to talk of getting out of the war. The complete success of these measures is possible only provided there is a world revolution, provided the revolution smothers the war and provided the workers of the world support it. Hence, the seizure of power is the only practical measure, it is the only way out.

PART II

INTERNAL PARTY QUESTIONS



MATERIALS RELATING TO THE REVISION OF THE PARTY PROGRAMME

PREFACE TO THE PAMPHLET "MATERIALS RELATING TO THE REVISION OF THE PARTY PROGRAMME"

THE Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party ("Bolsheviks") has instructed the undersigned¹ to publish immediately the material at present in the possession of the Central Committee relating to the revision of the Party programme.

This material consists of the following:

a) The initial draft of changes to be made in the theoretical and political parts of the programme, submitted by the present writer to the All-Russian Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. on May 7-12 (April 24-29), 1917, and examined so far only by the commission appointed by the Conference for the detailed elaboration of this question.

b) Comments on the draft, or in connection with the draft, made by the commission or by individual members of the commission.

c) My reply to these comments.

d) A complete draft of proposed changes in the economic minimum programme worked out at the Conference of May 7-12 (April 24-29), 1917, by the sub-commission on the protection of labour.

e) A draft, accompanied by brief explanatory notes, of changes to be made in the clauses of the Party programme dealing with public education. This draft was drawn up by N. K. Krupskaya after the Conference.

I am publishing this material together with brief notes, for I consider that the chief purpose of the Party in publishing this

¹ *I.e.*, Lenin.—*Ed.*

material at present is to secure the active participation of the greatest possible number of comrades in the work of drawing up the Party programme.

The proposed changes above enumerated, taken together, form the draft of the complete text of a new programme. I therefore give at the end of this pamphlet both the old and the new texts of the programme, arranged so as to present the reader with all the material in the form most convenient for comparison and for the insertion of amendments.

Upon the instructions of the Central Committee, I appeal to all comrades, both members of the Party and sympathisers, to give the widest possible publicity to this material in Party publications, to bring it to the attention of *every* member of the Party, and to address all comments and proposals to the office of *Pravda* (Moika 32, Petrograd, attention of Central Committee, Material Relating to Programme Revision).

June 2 (May 20), 1917

DRAFT REVISION OF THE THEORETICAL, POLITICAL AND OTHER SECTIONS OF THE PROGRAMME¹

At the end of the preamble to the programme (after the words "the standpoint of the proletariat") insert:

World capitalism has at the present time, *i.e.*, about the beginning of the twentieth century, reached the stage of imperialism. Imperialism, or the epoch of finance capital, represents a high stage of development of the capitalist economic system, one in which monopolist associations of capitalists—syndicates, cartels and trusts—have assumed decisive importance; enormously concentrated banking capital has fused with industrial capital; the export of capital to foreign countries has assumed enormous dimensions; the whole world has been divided up territorially among the richer countries, and the economic partitioning of the world among international trusts has begun.

Imperialist wars, *i.e.*, wars for the mastery of the world, for markets for bank capital and for the strangulation of small and weak nations, are inevitable under such a state of affairs. The first great imperialist war, the war of 1914-17, is precisely such a war.

The extremely high degree of development of world capitalism in general and the substitution of monopoly capitalism for free competition, the fact that

¹ It will be seen from "The Old and the New Texts of the Programme" given below where each of the amendments and additions proposed by Lenin belongs.—Ed.

the banks and also the capitalist combines have created an apparatus for the social regulation of the process of production and distribution of products, the rise in the cost of living and increased oppression of the working class by the syndicates due to the growth of capitalist monopolies, the enormous obstacles in the path of the economic and political struggle of the proletariat, the horrors of the imperialist war and the disaster and ruin caused by it—all these factors transform the present stage of capitalist development into an era of proletarian socialist revolution.

That era has begun.

Only a proletarian socialist revolution can lead humanity out of the deadlock created by imperialism and imperialist wars. No matter what difficulties the revolution may have to encounter, and in spite of possible temporary setbacks or waves of counter-revolution, the final victory of the proletariat is inevitable.

Objective conditions make it the urgent task of the present era to prepare the proletariat in every way for the conquest of political power with the purpose of realising the political and economic measures that make up the content of the socialist revolution.

* * *

The fulfilment of this task, which requires the complete confidence, the closest fraternal ties and the direct unity of revolutionary action of the working class of all advanced countries, is impossible without an immediate rupture in principle with the bourgeois perversion of socialism which has gained the upper hand among the leadership of a vast majority of the official Social-Democratic parties. Such a perversion is, on the one hand, the social-chauvinist current, socialism in word and chauvinism in deed, the defence of the predatory interests of one's "own" national bourgeoisie concealed under the slogan of "national defence"; and, on the other hand, the equally wide and international current of the so-called "Centre," which stands for unity with the social-chauvinists and for the preservation or correction of the bankrupt Second International, and which vacillates between social-chauvinism and the revolutionary internationalist struggle of the proletariat for the achievement of a socialist system.

* * *

In the minimum programme, the whole preamble (from the words "On the path" down to §1) should be eliminated, and replaced by the following:

In Russia at the present moment, when the Provisional Government, which is part and parcel of the capitalist class and enjoys the confidence—necessarily unstable—of broad masses of the petty-bourgeois population, has undertaken to convene a Constituent Assembly—the immediate duty of the party of the proletariat is to fight for a system of state organisation which will best guarantee the economic progress and the rights of the people in general, and make possible the least painful transition to socialism in particular.

The party of the proletariat cannot rest content with a bourgeois parliamentary democratic republic, which throughout the world preserves and strives to perpetuate the monarchist instruments for the oppression of the masses, namely, the police, the standing army and the privileged bureaucracy.

The Party fights for a more democratic workers' and peasants' republic, in which the police and the standing army will be completely abolished and replaced by the universally armed people, by a universal militia; all official persons will be not only elective, but also subject to recall at any time upon the demand of a majority of the electors; all official persons, without exception, will be paid at a rate not exceeding the average wage of a competent worker; parliamentary representative institutions will be gradually replaced by Soviets of people's representatives (from various classes and professions, or from various localities), functioning as both legislative and executive bodies.

The constitution of the Russian democratic republic must ensure:

§1. The sovereignty of the people; the supreme power of the state must be vested entirely in the people's representatives, who shall be elected by the people and be subject to recall at any time, and who shall constitute a single popular assembly, a single chamber.

§2. Add:

... Proportional representation at all elections; all delegates and elected officials, without exception, to be subject to recall at any time upon the decision of a majority of their electors.

§3. Add:

... The abolition of all local and provincial authorities appointed by the state.¹

The last sentence in § 8 to read thus:

... The use of the native language in all local public and state institutions; the abolition of an obligatory state language.

§9 to be amended as follows:

The right of all nationalities forming part of the state to freely separate and to form independent states. The republic of the Russian people must attract other nations or peoples not by force, but exclusively by their voluntary consent to the creation of a common state. The unity and fraternal alliance of the workers of all countries cannot be reconciled with the direct or indirect exercise of force against other nationalities.

§11 to read:

Election by the people of judges and other officials, both civil and military, with the right to recall any of them at any time by decision of a majority of their electors.

§12 to read:

Replacement of the police and standing army by the universally armed people; manual and non-manual workers to receive regular wages from the capitalists during time devoted to public service in the national militia.

* * *

¹ See *Pravda*, No. 68, June 10 (May 23), 1917, F. Engels' discussion of the Marxist and consistently democratic view on the question of the appointment and confirmation of officials elected by the local population.

After the fiscal section of the programme (following the words "on incomes and inheritances") insert:

The high level of development of capitalism in the banking business and in the trustified branches of industry, on the one hand, and the economic disruption caused by the imperialist war, everywhere provoking a demand for state and public control of the production and distribution of all important products, on the other, prompt the Party to demand the nationalisation of banks, syndicates (trusts), etc.

* * *

The agrarian programme to be formulated thus:

The beginning (from the words "in order to secure the abolition" to the words "Party demands") to be retained; the succeeding sections to be amended as follows:

1) Fights with all its strength for the immediate and complete confiscation of all landed estates (and also appanages, church lands, etc., etc.);

2) Stands for the immediate transfer of all land to the peasantry organised in Soviets of Peasants' Deputies or in other local government bodies elected on a truly democratic basis and completely independent of the landlords and bureaucrats;

3) Demands the nationalisation of all land in the state; while implying the transfer of all property in land to the state, nationalisation entrusts the right of disposal of the land to the local democratic institutions;

4) Upholds the initiative of the peasant committees that, in many localities of Russia, are transferring the livestock and agricultural implements of the landlords to the peasants organised in these committees for the purpose of their socially regulated utilisation in the cultivation of the land.

5) Advises the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians to strive for the formation out of every private estate of a sufficiently large model farm, to be conducted for the public account by the local Soviets of Agricultural Workers under the direction of trained agricultural experts and with the aid of the best technical appliances.

The Party under all circumstances, etc.—to the end of the paragraph ("exploitation").

The conclusion of the agrarian programme, from the words "The Party under all circumstances, and whatever the conditions of democratic agrarian reform may be" to the words "poverty and exploitation" to remain unchanged.

* * *

The whole concluding part of the programme, the last two paragraphs (from the words "In the endeavour to achieve" to the end) to be entirely eliminated.

Beginning of May (end of April) 1917

* * *

CONCERNING THE COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION OF THE APRIL
ALL-RUSSIAN CONFERENCE

Regarding the comments on the preamble to the programme, I must say the following.

In my opinion, there is no need for a revision of the entire preamble to the programme. The plan for such a revision proposed by the commission seems to me theoretically incorrect.

In its present form the preamble contains a description and analysis of the most important and essential features of capitalism as a social and economic system. Fundamentally, these features have not been changed by imperialism, the era of finance capital. Imperialism is a continuation of the development of capitalism, its highest stage—in a sense, a transition stage to socialism.

I cannot therefore regard the addition of an analysis of imperialism to the general analysis of the basic features of capitalism as “mechanical.” Imperialism, in fact, does not *and cannot transform* capitalism from top to bottom. Imperialism complicates and accentuates the contradictions of capitalism, it “entangles” monopoly with free competition, but *it cannot abolish* exchange, the market, competition, crises, etc.

Imperialism is capitalism which is withering, but not yet withered, dying but not dead. Not pure monopolies, but monopolies in conjunction with exchange, markets, competition, crises—such is the essential feature of imperialism in general.

This is why it is theoretically wrong to delete an analysis of exchange, commodity production, crises, etc., in general and to “replace” it by an analysis of imperialism *as a whole*. There is no such whole. There is a *transition* from competition to monopoly, and therefore the programme would be much more correct, and much more true to reality, if it retained the general analysis of exchange, commodity production, crises, etc., and added a characterisation of the *growing* monopolies. It is, in fact, this combination of antagonistic principles, *viz.*, competition and monopoly, that is the essence of imperialism, it is this that is making for the final crash, *i.e.*, the socialist revolution.

Furthermore, in the case of Russia it would be incorrect to

depict imperialism as an integral whole (imperialism in general is a disparate whole), since in Russia there are still many regions and many branches of labour that are in a state of transition from natural or semi-natural economy to capitalism. They are antiquated, they are weak, but, nevertheless, they exist, and under certain circumstances may introduce an element of delay in the collapse of capitalism.

The programme proceeds—as it should proceed—from the simplest to the more complex and “highest” phenomena of capitalism, from exchange to commodity production, to the crowding out of small industries by the larger ones, to crises and so forth, up to imperialism, which is the highest stage of capitalism, only just growing or only just having grown up in the advanced countries. That is how matters stand in actual reality. To begin by placing “exchange” in general and the export of capital side by side is incorrect historically and incorrect theoretically.

Such are my objections to the comments of the commission.

Written in May 1917

* * *

THE OLD AND THE NEW TEXTS OF THE PROGRAMME

For the purpose of an easier and more convenient comparison of the old and the new texts of the programme, both are printed below in the following manner:

The parts of the old programme which remain unchanged in the new are given in ordinary type.

The parts of the old programme which have been completely omitted in the new programme are given in italics.

The parts of the new programme which were not in the old programme are given in bold type.

Programme of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party

The development of exchange has established such close ties between all the nations of the civilised world that the great movement for the emancipation of the proletariat was bound to become—and has long since become—international.

Russian Social-Democracy regards itself as one of the detachments of the world army of the proletariat, and is striving for the same ultimate goal as the Social-Democrats of other countries. This ultimate goal is determined by the character of modern bourgeois society and by the course of its development. The principal specific feature of such a society is commodity production based on capitalist production relations, under which the most important and considerable part of the means of production and exchange of commodities belongs to a numerically small class of persons while the enormous majority of the population consists of proletarians and semi-proletarians who owing to their economic position are compelled permanently or periodically to sell their labour power, i.e., to hire themselves to the capitalists and to create by their labour the income of the upper classes of society.

The sphere of domination of capitalist production relations is becoming wider and wider as constant technical progress, by increasing the economic importance of big enterprises, leads to the squeezing out of the small independent producers and converts a section of them into proletarians, restricts the role played by the remainder in social and economic life and at times subjects them to the more or less complete, more or less obvious, more or less onerous dependence on capital.

Moreover, this technical progress enables the capitalists to employ female and child labour in the process of production and exchange of commodities to an ever increasing degree. And since, on the other hand, this progress causes a relative decrease in the employers' demand for human labour power, the demand for labour power necessarily lags behind the supply, as a consequence of which the dependence of wage labour on capital is increased and the level of exploitation of labour is raised.

This state of affairs in the bourgeois countries and the constantly growing mutual competition among them in the world market makes it more and more difficult for them to sell the goods which are produced in ever increasing quantities. Overproduction, which manifests itself in more or less acute industrial crises followed by more or less lengthy periods of industrial stagnation, is an inevitable consequence of the development of the productive forces in bourgeois

society. Crises and periods of industrial stagnation, in their turn, still further ruin the small producers, still further increase the dependence of wage labour on capital, and lead still more rapidly to the relative and sometimes to the absolute deterioration of the conditions of the working class.

Thus, the improvement in technology, which implies an increase in the productivity of labour and an increase of social wealth, brings about in bourgeois society an increase in social inequality, a greater disparity between rich and poor, a greater precariousness of existence, unemployment and various hardships for ever increasing strata of the toiling masses.

But in proportion to the growth and development of all these contradictions inherent in bourgeois society the discontent of the toiling and exploited masses with the existing order of things grows also, the numerical strength and solidarity of the proletarians increase and their struggle against their exploiters becomes more intense. At the same time, by concentrating the means of production and exchange and socialising the process of labour in capitalist enterprises, the improvement in technology more and more rapidly creates the material possibility of capitalist production relations being superseded by socialist relations, *i.e.*, the possibility of bringing about the social revolution which is the final goal of the entire activity of international Social-Democracy, the conscious exponent of the class movement.

Having substituted the social ownership of the means of production and exchange for private ownership, and having introduced the planned organisation of the social production process in order to ensure the well-being and all-sided development of all the members of society, the proletarian social revolution will abolish the division of society into classes and thereby emancipate the whole of oppressed humanity, for it will put an end to all forms of exploitation of one section of society by another.

A necessary condition for this social revolution is the dictatorship of the proletariat, *i.e.*, the conquest by the proletariat of such political power as will enable it to suppress all resistance on the part of the exploiters. Setting itself the task of making the proletariat capable of performing its great historic mission, international

Social-Democracy organises the proletariat into an independent political party opposed to all the bourgeois parties, guides all the manifestations of its class struggle, reveals to it the irreconcilable antagonism between the interests of the exploiters and those of the exploited and explains to the proletariat the historical importance and the necessary conditions for the impending social revolution. At the same time it reveals to all the other toiling and exploited masses the hopelessness of their position in capitalist society and the necessity of a social revolution for the purpose of emancipating themselves from the yoke of capital. The Social-Democratic Party, the party of the working class, calls upon all strata of the toiling and exploited population to join its ranks in so far as they adopt the standpoint of the proletariat.

World capitalism has at the present time, i.e. about the beginning of the twentieth century, reached the stage of imperialism. Imperialism, or the epoch of finance capital, represents a high stage of development of the capitalist economic system, one in which monopolist associations of capitalists—syndicates, cartels and trusts—have assumed decisive importance; enormously concentrated banking capital has fused with industrial capital; the export of capital to foreign countries has assumed enormous dimensions; the whole world has been divided up territorially among the richer countries, and the economic partitioning of the world among international trusts has begun.

Imperialist wars, i.e., wars for the mastery of the world, for markets for bank capital and for the strangulation of small and weak nations, are inevitable under such a state of affairs. The first great imperialist war, the war of 1914-17, is precisely such a war.

The extremely high degree of development of world capitalism in general and the substitution of monopoly capitalism for free competition, the fact that the banks and also the capitalist combines have created an apparatus for the social regulation of the process of production and distribution of products, the rise in the cost of living and increased oppression of the working class by the syndicates due to the growth of capitalist monopolies, the enormous obstacles in the path of the economic and political struggle of the prole-

tariat, the horrors of the imperialist war and the disaster and ruin caused by it—all these factors transform the present stage of capitalist development into an era of proletarian socialist revolution.

That era has begun.

Only a proletarian socialist revolution can lead humanity out of the deadlock created by imperialism and imperialist wars. No matter what difficulties the revolution may have to encounter, and in spite of possible temporary set-backs or waves of counter-revolution, the final victory of the proletariat is inevitable.

Objective conditions make it the urgent task of the present era to prepare the proletariat in every way for the conquest of political power with the purpose of realising the political and economic measures that make up the content of the socialist revolution.

* * *

The fulfilment of this task, which requires the complete confidence, the closest fraternal ties and the direct unity of revolutionary action of the working class of all advanced countries, is impossible without an immediate rupture in principle with the bourgeois perversion of socialism which has gained the upper hand among the leadership of a vast majority of the official Social-Democratic parties. Such a perversion is, on the one hand, the social-chauvinist current, socialism in word and chauvinism in deed, the defence of the predatory interests of one's "own" national bourgeoisie concealed under the slogan of "national defence"; and, on the other hand, the equally wide and international current of the so-called "Centre," which stands for unity with the social-chauvinists and for the preservation or correction of the bankrupt Second International, and which vacillates between social-chauvinism and the revolutionary international struggle of the proletariat for the achievement of a socialist system.

On the path to their common final goal, determined by the fact that the capitalist system of production dominates the whole civilised world, on the path to that goal the Social-Democrats of the various countries are obliged to set themselves varying immediate tasks, both because the capitalist system is not everywhere developed in the same degree, and because in different countries the social and political setting of its development is different.

In Russia, although capitalism has already become the prevailing mode of production, there still remain numerous relics of the former, pre-capitalist system, which was based on the feudal servitude of the toiling masses to the landlords, to the state, or to the head of the state.

Considerably hampering economic progress, these relics also hinder the full development of the class struggle of the proletariat; they help to preserve and intensify the most barbarous forms of exploitation of the vast peasant population on the part of the state and the propertied classes and to keep the people in a state of ignorance and subjection.

The most considerable of these relics of the past, and the most powerful bulwark of this barbarism, is the tsarist autocracy. Its very nature obliges it to be hostile to every social movement and to be the bitterest opponent of every aspiration towards freedom on the part of the proletariat.

By reason of the above, the prime and immediate task which the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party sets itself is to overthrow the tsarist autocracy and to set up a democratic republic in its place, the constitution of which would guarantee the following:

In Russia at the present moment, when the Provisional Government, which is part and parcel of the capitalist class and enjoys the confidence—necessarily unstable—of broad masses of the petty-bourgeois population, has undertaken to convene a Constituent Assembly—the immediate duty of the party of the proletariat is to fight for a system of state organisation which will best guarantee the economic progress and the rights of the people in general, and make possible the least painful transition to socialism in particular.

The party of the proletariat cannot rest content with a bourgeois parliamentary democratic republic, which throughout the world preserves and strives to perpetuate the monarchist instruments for the oppression of the masses, namely, the police, the standing army and the privileged bureaucracy.

The Party fights for a more democratic workers' and peasants' republic, in which the police and the standing army will be completely abolished and replaced by the universally armed people, by a universal militia; all official persons will be not only elective, but also subject to recall at any time upon the demand of a

majority of the electors; all official persons, without exception, will be paid at a rate not exceeding the average wage of a competent worker; parliamentary representative institutions will be gradually replaced by Soviets of people's representatives (from various classes and professions, or from various localities), functioning as both legislative and executive bodies.

The constitution of the Russian democratic republic must ensure:

1) The sovereignty of the people; the supreme power of the state must be vested entirely in the people's representatives, who shall be elected by the people and be subject to recall at any time, and who shall constitute a single popular assembly, a single chamber.

1) The sovereignty of the people, i.e., the concentration of the supreme state power in the hands of a legislative assembly, consisting of the representatives of the people and constituting a single chamber.

2) Universal, equal, and direct suffrage for all male and female citizens of twenty years of age or over in all elections to the legislative assembly and to the various local government bodies; secret ballot; the right of every voter to be elected to any representative institution; biennial parliaments; payment of people's representatives; **proportional representation at all elections; all delegates and elected officials, without exception, to be subject to recall at any time upon the decision of a majority of their electors.**

3) Local government on a wide scale; regional government in all localities where the population is specific in composition and is distinguished by specific social conditions; **the abolition of all local and provincial authorities appointed by the state.**

4) Inviolability of person and domicile.

5) Unhampered freedom of conscience, speech, press, assembly, strikes and combination.

6) Freedom of movement and occupation.

7) Abolition of the social orders, and equal rights for all citizens irrespective of sex, creed, race, or nationality.

8) The right of the people to receive instruction in their native tongue in schools established at the expense of the state and local

government bodies; the right of every citizen to speak at assemblies in his native language; the use of the native language *equally with the state language* in all local, public, and state institutions; the **abolition of an obligatory state language.**

9) *The right of self-determination for all nationalities forming part of the state.*

9) **The right of all nationalities forming part of the state to freely separate and to form independent states. The republic of the Russian people must attract other nations or peoples not by force, but exclusively by their voluntary consent to the creation of a common state. The unity and fraternal alliance of the workers of all countries cannot be reconciled with the direct or indirect exercise of force against other nationalities.**

10) **The right of all persons to sue any official before an ordinary court of jury.**

11) *Election of judges by the people.*

11) **Election by the people of judges and other officials, both civil and military, with the right to recall any of them at any time by decision of a majority of their electors.**

12) *Replacement of the standing army by the universally armed people.*

12) **Replacement of the police and standing army by the universally armed people; manual and non-manual workers to receive regular wages from the capitalists during time devoted to public service in the national militia.**

13) **Separation of church from the state, and schools from the church; schools to be absolutely secular.**

14) *Free and compulsory general and vocational education for all children of both sexes up to the age of sixteen; poor children to be provided with food, clothing, and educational supplies at the expense of the state.*

14) **Free and compulsory general and technical education (familiarising the student with the theoretical and practical aspects of the most important branches of industry) for all children of both sexes up to the age of sixteen; education to be closely associated with the performance by children of socially productive labour.**

15) **Students to be provided with food, clothing, and educational supplies at the cost of the state.**

16) Education to be entrusted to democratically elected local government bodies; the central government not to be allowed to interfere with the arrangement of the school curriculum, or with the selection of the teaching staffs; teachers to be elected directly by the population itself with the right of the latter to remove undesirable teachers.

As a fundamental condition for the democratisation of the economic life of the state, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party demands the abolition of all indirect taxes and the establishment of a progressive tax on incomes and inheritances.

The high level of development of capitalism in the banking business and in the trustified branches of industry, on the one hand, and the economic disruption caused by the imperialist war, everywhere provoking a demand for state and public control of the production and distribution of all important products, on the other, prompt the Party to demand the nationalisation of banks, syndicates (trusts), etc.

In order to safeguard the working class against physical and moral deterioration, and in order to ensure the development of its ability to carry on the struggle for emancipation, the Party demands:

1) *An eight-hour working day for all wage workers.*

1) **Limitation of the working day of all wage workers to eight hours, including a break of not less than one hour for meals where work is continuous. In dangerous and unhealthy industries the working day to be reduced to from four to six hours.**

2) **A weekly uninterrupted rest period of not less than forty-two hours to be established by law for all wage workers of both sexes in all branches of national economy.**

3) **Complete prohibition of overtime work.**

4) *Prohibition of night work (from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m.) in all branches of national economy with the exception of those in which it is absolutely necessary on the grounds of technical considerations attested by labour organisations.*

4) **Prohibition of night work (from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m.) in all branches of national economy with the exception of those in which it is absolutely necessary for technical considerations attested by labour organisations—provided, however, that night work shall not exceed four hours.**

5) *Prohibition of the employment of children of school age (up to sixteen) and restriction of the working day of adolescents (from sixteen to eighteen) to six hours.*

5) **Prohibition of the employment of children of school age (up to sixteen), restriction of the working day of adolescents (from sixteen to twenty) to four hours, and prohibition of the employment of adolescents on night work in unhealthy industries and in mines.**

6) *Prohibition of female labour in branches of industry injurious to the health of women; women to be released from work for four weeks before and six weeks after childbirth, with retention of regular pay during this period.*

6) **Prohibition of female labour in all branches of industry injurious to the health of women; prohibition of night work for women; women to be released from work eight weeks before and eight weeks after childbirth, with retention of regular pay during this period and the receipt of free medical and pharmaceutical aid.**

7) *Establishment of nurseries for infants and young children in all works, factories and other enterprises employing women; nursing mothers to be allowed recesses of at least half-hour duration at intervals of not more than three hours.*

7) **Establishment of nurseries for infants and small children and rooms for nursing mothers in all works, factories and other enterprises employing women; nursing mothers to be allowed recesses of at least half-hour duration at intervals of not more than three hours; nursing mothers to be provided with material assistance and their working day to be limited to six hours.**

8) *State old age insurance and insurance against total or partial disability, to be covered by a fund formed by a special tax on the capitalists.*

8) **Full social insurance:**

a) **for all forms of wage labour;**

b) **against every kind of disability, e.g., sickness, injury, infirmity, old age, occupational disease, childbirth, widowhood, orphanhood, and also against unemployment.**

c) **all insurance institutions to be administered entirely by the insured themselves;**

d) **the expense of insurance to be born by the capitalist;**

- e) free medical and pharmaceutical treatment under the control of self-governing sick benefit societies, the management bodies of which are to be elected by the workers.

9) *Prohibition of wages in kind; establishment of regular weekly pay-days in all labour contracts without exception; wages to be paid in cash and during working hours.*

10) *Prohibition of deductions by employers from wages on any pretext or for any purpose whatsoever (fines, spoilage, etc.).*

11) *Appointment of an adequate number of factory inspectors in all branches of national economy; factory inspection to be extended to all enterprises employing hired labour, government enterprises not excepted (domestic service also to be liable to inspection); women inspectors to be appointed in industries employing female labour; representatives elected by the workers and paid by the state to participate in supervising the observance of the factory laws, the fixing of wage scales and the acceptance or rejection of raw materials and finished products.*

9) *The establishment of a labour inspectorate elected by the workers' organisations and covering all enterprises employing hired labour, as well as domestic servants; women inspectors to be appointed in enterprises employing female labour.*

12) *Local government bodies, assisted by representatives elected by the workers, to supervise the sanitary conditions of dwellings assigned to workers by employers, as well as the internal regulations in force in such dwellings and the renting conditions, with the purpose of protecting wage workers against the interference of employers with their life and activities as private citizens.*

13) *Properly organised sanitary control over all undertakings employing hired labour, the medical and sanitary service to be entirely independent of the employers; free medical aid to the workers at the expense of the employers, with full pay during sickness.*

14) *Employers violating labour protection laws to be liable to criminal prosecution.*

10) *Sanitary laws for the improvement of hygienic conditions and the protection of the life and health of workers in enterprises employing hired labour; questions of hygiene to be entrusted to a sanitary inspectorate elected by the workers.*

11) Housing laws to be enacted and housing inspectors elected by the workers' organisations for the purpose of supervising the sanitary condition of dwelling houses. However, only by the abolition of private ownership in land and the erection of cheap and hygienic dwellings can the housing problem be solved.

12) Industrial courts in all branches of national economy.

15) *Industrial courts in all branches of national economy, composed of equal numbers of representatives from the workers' and employers' organisations.*

16) *Establishment of employment bureaus (labour exchanges) by local government bodies in all branches of industry for the hire of local and non-local workers; representatives of the workers and employers to participate in their administration.*

13) Establishment of labour exchanges for the proper organisation of the placing of unemployed workers. The labour exchanges must be proletarian class organisations (and not organised on a parity basis), and must be closely associated with the trade unions and other working class organisations and financed by local government bodies.

In order to secure the abolition of the relics of serfdom, which constitute a direct and heavy burden on the peasants, and in order to encourage the development of the class struggle in the countryside, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party demands:

1) *The abolition of all restrictions upon the person and property of peasants arising out of the system of social orders.*

2) *The abolition of all payments and duties imposed upon the peasants as a social order, and the cancellation of all debts of a usurious character.*

3) *The confiscation of church lands, monastery lands, and appanage and tsar's lands and their transfer (together with state lands) to the control of the higher local government bodies embracing urban and rural districts; lands required for the migration fund, and also forests and waters of state importance, to be transferred to the democratic state.*

4) *The confiscation of private lands, with the exception of small land holdings, and their transfer to the control of the higher democratically elected local government bodies. The minimum size of estates liable to confiscation to be determined by the higher*

local government bodies. While supporting all revolutionary action on the part of the peasantry, including the confiscation of the large estates of the landlords, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party is absolutely opposed to all attempts to hinder the course of economic development. While striving for the transfer of confiscated lands to the democratic local government bodies in the event of a victorious development of the revolution, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party will, if circumstances prove unfavourable for such a transfer, declare itself in favour of dividing among the peasants landed estates on which small husbandry had previously been conducted or which are required in order to round out the peasants' holdings.

1) Fights with all its strength for the immediate and complete confiscation of all landed estates (and also appanages, church lands, etc., etc.);

2) Stands for the immediate transfer of all land to the peasantry organised in Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, or in other local government bodies, elected on a truly democratic basis and completely independent of the landlords and bureaucrats;

3) Demands the nationalisation of all land in the state; while implying the transfer of all property in land to the state, nationalisation entrusts the right of disposal of the land to the local democratic institutions;

4) Upholds the initiative of the peasant committees that, in many localities of Russia, are transferring the livestock and agricultural implements of the landlords to the peasants organised in these committees for the purpose of their socially regulated utilisation in the cultivation of the land;

5) Advises the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians to strive for the formation out of every private estate of a sufficiently large model farm, to be conducted for the public account by the local Soviets of Agricultural Workers under the direction of trained agricultural experts and with the aid of the best technical appliances.

Furthermore, the Party under all circumstances, and whatever the conditions of democratic agrarian reform may be, will unswervingly strive for the independent class organisation of the rural proletariat, will explain to the latter the irreconcilability of its interests with the interests of the peasant bourgeoisie, will

warn it against the seduction of small husbandry, which, while commodity production exists, can never do away with the poverty of the masses, and, finally, will point out the necessity for a complete socialist revolution as the only means of abolishing poverty and exploitation.

In the endeavour to achieve its immediate aims, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party supports all oppositional and revolutionary movements directed against the existing social and political system in Russia, but at the same time vigorously repudiates all reformist projects providing for the extension or consolidation of the guardianship of the police and bureaucracy over the labouring classes.

For its part, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party is firmly convinced that a complete, consistent and enduring realisation of the political and social reforms indicated can be achieved only by the overthrow of the autocracy and by the convocation of a Constituent Assembly freely elected by the entire people.

May 1917

THE PROBLEM OF UNITING THE INTERNATIONALISTS

THE All-Russian Conference of our Party passed a resolution recognising the necessity for closer relations and amalgamation with the groups and tendencies which stand for internationalism in practice, on the basis of a repudiation of the policy of petty-bourgeois betrayal of socialism.

The question of unity was also recently discussed at a conference of the Inter-Regional Organisation of the United Social-Democrats of Petrograd.

In compliance with the decision of the All-Russian Conference, the Central Committee of our Party, recognising the extreme desirability of union with the Inter-Regional Organisation, advanced the following proposals (they were first made to the Inter-Regional Organisation only in the name of Comrade Lenin and a few other members of the Central Committee, but were subsequently approved by the majority of the members of the Central Committee):

"Unity is desirable immediately. It will be proposed to the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party that a representative of the Inter-Regional Organisation be included on the staff of each of the two papers (the present *Pravda*, which is to be converted into an All-Russian popular newspaper, and the central organ to be established in the near future).

"It will be proposed to the Central Committee to set up an Organisation Commission for the purpose of summoning a Party Congress (within the next one and a half months).

"The Inter-Regional Conference will be entitled to appoint two delegates to this commission. If the Mensheviks who follow Martov break with the 'defencists,' it would be desirable and indispensable to include their delegates on the above-mentioned commission.

"Free discussion of controversial questions shall be ensured by the publication of discussion sheets in *Priboy* and by free discussion in the periodical *Prosveshchenie*, publication of which is being resumed." (*Kommunist*. A draft read by N. Lenin on May 23 [10], 1917, in his own name and in the name of several members of the Central Committee.)

The Inter-Regional Organisation, for their part, passed a resolution which reads:

"Concerning unity. Realising that only by the closest consolidation of all revolutionary forces of the proletariat

"1) can it become the foremost fighter in clearing the way for socialism;

"2) will it be able to become the leader of Russian democracy in its struggle against the survivals of the semi-feudal regime and the heritage of tsarism;

"3) will it be possible to bring the revolution to a decisive conclusion and finally settle the questions of war and peace, the confiscation of the land, an eight-hour working day, etc.;

"the Conference is of the opinion

"a) that a consolidation of forces, so indispensable to the proletariat, can be achieved only under the banner of Zimmerwald and Kienthal, and the programme and decisions of the Party of the years 1903 and 1910, 1912 and 1913;

"b) that not a single workers' organisation, be it a trade union, educational club, or consumers' co-operative, and not a single labour newspaper or periodical should refrain from enlisting under that banner;

"c) at the same time, the Conference declares itself to be decidedly and ardently in favour of unity on the basis of the resolutions indicated."

Which resolution is most likely to lead to unity is a question for all internationalist workers to discuss and decide.

The political resolutions of the Inter-Regional Organisation have in general adopted the sound course of breaking with the "defencists."

Under the circumstances, any division of forces would, in our opinion, be utterly unjustifiable.

May 31 (18), 1917

PART III

THE PROLETARIAT AND THE PARTY ON THE ROAD TO OCTOBER

LESSONS OF THE CRISIS

PETROGRAD, and the whole of Russia, have passed through a serious political crisis, the first political crisis since the revolution.

On May 1 (April 18) the Provisional Government issued its notorious note, in which the predatory aims of the war were confirmed with such clarity as to arouse the indignation of the masses, who had honestly believed in the desire (and ability) of the capitalists to "renounce annexations." On May 3-4 (April 20-21) Petrograd was in a ferment. The streets were filled with people; groups, crowds and meetings of various sizes assembled everywhere, day and night; mass manifestations and demonstrations proceeded uninterruptedly. Yesterday, May 4 (April 21), the crisis, or, at any rate, the first stage of the crisis, apparently came to an end: the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, and later the Soviet itself, declared the "explanations," the amendments to the note and the "elucidations" made by the government (empty phrases, which said absolutely nothing, changed nothing and committed it to nothing) to be satisfactory, and regarded the "incident" as "closed."

Whether the masses regard the "incident" as "closed," the future will show. Our duty now is to make a careful examination of the *forces*, the classes, that revealed themselves in the crisis, and to draw the necessary conclusions in the interests of the party of the proletariat. For it is the great merit of all crises that they reveal what is hidden, cast aside all that is conventional, superficial and petty, sweep away the political garbage and expose the real main-springs of the *class struggle*.

As a matter of fact, on May 1 (April 18) the capitalist government merely reiterated its previous notes, in which the imperialist war was enveloped in diplomatic equivocations. The soldier masses were aroused to indignation, because they had honestly

believed in the sincerity and the pacific intentions of the capitalists. The demonstrations began as *soldiers'* demonstrations, under the self-contradictory, unenlightened and useless slogan, "Down with Milyukov" (as though a change of persons or cliques can change the *essence* of politics!).

This meant that the wide, unstable and vacillating mass, which is most closely associated with the peasantry and which by its scientific class definition is petty-bourgeois, swung *away from* the capitalists *towards* the revolutionary workers. It was this fluctuation, or movement, of a mass the strength of which is capable of *deciding everything* that created the crisis.

Thereupon *not* the middle but the extreme elements, *not* the intermediary petty-bourgeois mass but the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, began to stir, come out on to the streets, and organise.

The bourgeoisie seized the Nevsky Prospect—or the "Milyukov" Prospect, as one paper calls it—and the adjacent quarters of prosperous Petrograd, bureaucratic and capitalist Petrograd. Officers, students and "the middle classes" demonstrated *in favour* of the Provisional Government. Among the slogans on the banners one often saw the inscription, "Down with Lenin."

The proletariat rose in *its own* districts, the workers' suburbs, organised around the slogans and watchwords of the Central Committee of our Party. On May 3-4 (April 20-21) the Central Committee adopted resolutions, which through the apparatus of the organisation were immediately passed on to the proletarian masses. The workers' processions filled the *poor* and less central sections of the city, but later in groups penetrated to the Nevsky. By their mass character and solidarity, the proletarian demonstrations offered a sharp contrast to those of the bourgeoisie. Among the banners one noted the inscription, "All Power to the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies."

On the Nevsky a collision took place. The "hostile" processions tore each other's banners. The Executive Committee was informed on the telephone from various parts that there was shooting on both sides, that there were killed and wounded; but the information was extremely contradictory and lacked confirmation.

By shouting about the "spectre of civil war," the bourgeoisie betrayed its fear that the real masses, the actual majority of the people, might seize power. The petty-bourgeois leaders of the Soviet, the Mensheviks and Narodniki, who since the revolution, and particularly during the crisis, have had no definite party policy, allowed themselves to be intimidated. In the Executive Committee, in which on the eve of the crisis almost half the votes were cast against the Provisional Government, thirty-four votes (as against nineteen) were now cast *in favour* of returning to a policy of confidence in and agreement with the capitalists.

The "incident" is regarded as "closed."

What is the *essence* of the class struggle? The capitalists are *in favour* of continuing the war, and of concealing the fact by phrases and promises. They have become entangled in the network of Russian, Anglo-French and *American* bank capital. The proletariat, as represented by its class conscious vanguard, stands *for* the transfer of power to the revolutionary class, the working class and the semi-proletarians, *for* the development of a world-wide workers' revolution, which is clearly rising also in Germany, and *for* terminating the war by means of *such* a revolution.

The broad masses, predominantly petty-bourgeois, who still believe the Narodnik and Menshevik leaders, these masses, who have been thoroughly intimidated by the bourgeoisie and are carrying out its policy, although with certain reservations, swing now to the Right, now to the Left.

The war is terrible; it is the masses that are feeling it most keenly; it is among them that the conviction is growing, although not yet very clearly, that the war is criminal, that it is being waged because of the rivalry and the scramble of the capitalists for the division of *their* spoils. The world situation is growing more and more involved. *There is no escape* except by a world proletarian revolution, which *at present* is most advanced in Russia, but which is obviously developing (strikes, fraternisation) in Germany too. And the masses are vacillating: they are vacillating between faith in their old masters, the capitalists, and bitterness towards them; between faith in the new class, the only consistently revolutionary

class, which opens the prospect of a bright future for all who toil—the proletariat—and a vague understanding of its world-wide and historical role.

This is not the first *and not the last* time the petty-bourgeois and the semi-proletarian masses will vacillate!

The lesson is clear, comrade-workers! Time will not wait. The first crisis will be followed by others. *All* your efforts must be devoted to enlightening the backward, to creating mass, comradely and direct contact (not only by meetings) with every regiment and with every group of still unenlightened toilers. *All* your strength must be devoted to consolidating your own forces, to organising the workers from the ground up, embracing every borough, every factory, every quarter of the capital and its suburbs! Do not be misled by the petty-bourgeois “compromisers” with the capitalists, by the defencists and by the “supporters,” nor by individuals who are inclined to be in a hurry and to shout, “Down with the Provisional Government!” before the majority of the people are firmly united. The crisis cannot be overcome by violence exercised by certain individuals against others, by the partial action of small groups of armed people, by Blanquist attempts to “seize power,” to “arrest” the Provisional Government, etc.

The watchword for today is to explain more carefully, more clearly, more widely the proletarian policy, the *proletarian* way of terminating the war. Rally more resolutely, more widely, more universally, to the ranks and columns of the proletariat! Rally around your Soviets; and within them by comradely suasion and by new elections in the case of individual members endeavour to rally around yourselves a majority of the Soviets!

May 6 (April 23), 1917

THE "CRISIS OF POWER"

ALL Russia still remembers the days of May 2-4 (April 19-21), when civil war was on the verge of breaking out in the streets of Petrograd.

On May 4 (April 21) the Provisional Government wrote a new document, "explaining" away the predatory character of the note of May 1, and intended to have a pacifying effect.

Thereupon a majority of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies decided to regard the "incident" as "closed."

But a couple of days later the question of a coalition cabinet arose. The Executive Committee was almost equally divided: twenty-three voted against a coalition cabinet and twenty-two for. The incident proved to have been "closed" only on paper.

Another two days pass and we have a new "incident." The Minister for War, Guchkov, one of the leaders of the Provisional Government, has resigned. There are rumours that the resignation of the whole Provisional Government has been decided on. (At the time of writing it is not certain whether the whole government has resigned.) Thus, we have a fresh "incident," one before which all previous "incidents" pale.

Whence this multiplicity of "incidents"? Is there not a fundamental cause that inevitably gives rise to "incident" after "incident"?

Yes, there is such a cause. It is what is known as the dual power, that unstable equilibrium resulting from the agreement between the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and the Provisional Government.

The Provisional Government is a government of the capitalists.

It cannot renounce its strivings for conquest (annexations), it cannot end the predatory war by a democratic peace, it cannot but protect the profits of its own class (the capitalist class), it cannot but protect the estates of the landlords.

The Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies represents other classes. The majority of the workers and soldiers in the Soviet do not want a predatory war, they are not interested in the profits of the capitalists and in preserving the privileges of the landlords. Nevertheless, they still have faith in the Provisional Government of the capitalists, they desire to come to an agreement with it, to be in contact with it.

The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies are themselves the embryo of a power. Side by side with the Provisional Government, the Soviets likewise endeavour in certain cases to assert their power. There is thus an overlapping of powers, or, as it is now called, a "crisis of power."

This cannot continue for long. Under such a state of affairs new "incidents" and fresh complications are bound to arise every day. It is easy to write on paper: "The incident is closed." But in real life these incidents will not vanish—and for the very simple reason that they are not "incidents," not chance happenings and not trifles. They are the external manifestation of a profound internal crisis. They are consequences of the fact that humanity is in a blind alley. There can be no escape from this rapacious war unless we make up our minds to adopt the measures proposed by the Socialist-Internationalists.¹

Three ways of ending this "crisis of power" are being proposed to the Russian people. Some say: Leave things as they are and place ever greater confidence in the Provisional Government. It is possible that they are threatening to resign in order to compel the Soviets to say: We shall trust you still more. The Provisional Government wants to be implored: Come and rule us; whom have we but you? . . .

Another way is a coalition cabinet. Let us share the ministerial portfolios with Milyukov and his friends, they say, let us get a few

¹ *Socialist-Internationalists*.—Lenin is referring to the Bolsheviks.—Ed.

of our own people into the cabinet; then we shall hear a different tune.

The third way is the one we propose: The entire policy of the Soviets must be changed, no confidence must be placed in the capitalists, and the *entire power must be transferred to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies*. A change of *individuals* will lead nowhere; the *policy* must be changed. The power of government must be assumed by another class. A government of workers and soldiers will earn the confidence of the whole world, for it is obvious to all that the workers and poor peasants desire to rob nobody. That alone can hasten the end of the war, that alone can help us to recover from economic ruin.

All power to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies!
No confidence in the government of the capitalists!

Every "incident," every day, every hour will corroborate the *correctness* of this slogan.

May 15 (2), 1917

ON THE EVE

THE "compromise" machine is working at full speed. The Narodniki and the Mensheviks are toiling in the sweat of their brow to compile a list of ministers. We are on the eve of a "new" cabinet. . . .

Alas! There will be very little that is new in it. To the government of the capitalists there will be added an appendage of petty-bourgeois ministers, Narodniki and Mensheviks who have allowed themselves to be lured into supporting the imperialist war.

More phrases, more fireworks, magnificent promises, more jabber about a "peace without annexations"—and an utter lack of decision, even in the matter of enumerating precisely, directly and honestly the *actual* annexations of, say, three countries: Germany, Russia and England.

Deceiving yourselves with the utopian belief that the peasants will support the capitalists (prosperous peasants are not the whole peasantry. . . .), with a utopian "offensive" at the front (in the name of "a peace without annexations". . .)—can that last long, citizens of the old and the new cabinets?

May 18 (5), 1917

CLASS COLLABORATION WITH CAPITAL, OR A CLASS WAR AGAINST CAPITAL?

THAT is the way history puts the question; and not history in general, but the economic and political history of the Russia of *today*.

The Narodniki and the Mensheviks, Chernov and Tseretelli, have transferred the Contact Commission from the room adjoining (the one in which the ministers used to meet) to the ministerial chamber itself. This, and this alone, is the pure political significance of the "new" cabinet.

Its economic and class significance is that, at the best (from the point of view of the stability of the cabinet and the preservation of capitalist domination), the upper strata of the peasant bourgeoisie, headed since 1906 by Peshekhonov, and the petty-bourgeois "leaders" of the Menshevik workers have *promised* the capitalists their class collaboration. (At the worst—for the capitalists—the whole change has a purely personal or clique significance, and no class significance whatsoever.)

Let us assume that the more favourable eventuality is the case. Even so, there can be not a shadow of doubt that the promisers will be unable to fulfil their promises. "We shall—in conjunction with the capitalists—help to bring the country out of the crisis, to avert its ruin and save it from the war"—that is the real meaning of the fact that the leaders of the petty bourgeoisie, the Chernovs and Tseretellis, have joined the cabinet. Our answer is: Your help, is not enough. The crisis has advanced infinitely farther than you imagine. Only the revolutionary class, by taking revolutionary measures against capital, can save the country—and not our country alone.

The crisis is so profound, so widely ramified, so world-wide, closely bound up with capital itself, that the class struggle against capital must inevitably assume the form of the political domination of the proletariat and semi-proletariat. There is no other way.

You want revolutionary enthusiasm in the army, Citizens Chernov and Tseretelli? But you cannot arouse it, for the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses is not aroused by a change of leaders in cabinets, by florid declarations, or by promises to take measures for the revision of the treaty with the British capitalists; it can be aroused only by acts of revolutionary policy patent and undertaken daily and everywhere *against* the omnipotence of capital and against its deriving profits from the war, a policy that will make for a radical improvement in the standard of living of the impoverished masses.

Even if you were to hand over all the land to the people immediately, it would not end the crisis unless revolutionary measures were resorted to against capital.

You want an offensive, Citizens Chernov and Tseretelli? But you cannot rouse the army to an offensive, for at present you cannot use force *against* the people. And unless force is used against the people, they will undertake an offensive only in the great interests of the great revolution against capital in all countries; and not merely a revolution promised and proclaimed, but a revolution actually in process of realisation, a revolution which is being carried out in actual fact, a revolution obvious and tangible for all.

You want to organise supply, Citizens Peshekhonovs and Sobolevs, the supply of the peasants with goods, the army with bread and meat, industry with raw material, and so forth? You want control over, and partly even the organisation of, production?

You cannot accomplish that without the revolutionary enthusiasm of the proletarians and semi-proletarians. And such enthusiasm can be aroused only by taking revolutionary measures against the privileges and profits of capital. Unless such measures are taken, your promised control will remain a dead, capitalist, bureaucratic half-measure.

The experiment of class collaboration with capital is now being conducted by the Chernovs and Tseretellis, and by certain sections of the petty bourgeoisie, on a new, gigantic, all-Russian national scale.

All the more valuable will be its lessons for the people, when the latter become convinced—and that apparently will be soon—of the futility and hopelessness of such collaboration.

May 19 (6), 1917

RUIN IS THREATENING

NEWS, arguments, apprehensions, rumours of an imminent catastrophe are becoming more and more frequent. The capitalist newspapers are trying to frighten the people; they are foaming at the mouth against the Bolsheviks and making play of Kutler's anonymous references to "a certain" factory, to "certain" factories, to "certain" enterprises, and so forth. Remarkable methods, strange "proofs" indeed. . . . Why do they not name a definite factory? Why do they not afford the public and the workers the opportunity of verifying these rumours, which are deliberately calculated to arouse alarm?

It should not be difficult for the capitalists to understand that unless they present definite facts, name definite factories, they are only making themselves ridiculous. Why, you are the government, Messieurs the capitalists, ten out of the sixteen ministers are yours, you bear the responsibility, you are the masters of the situation. Is it not ridiculous that those who have a majority in the government and are the masters of the situation should confine themselves to Kutler's anonymous references, should be afraid to come out openly and straightforwardly, and should try to shift responsibility to other parties that are not at the helm of the state?

The newspapers of the petty-bourgeois parties, of the Narodniki and the Mensheviks, are also complaining, but in a somewhat different tone. They do not so much level accusations against the terrible Bolsheviks (although, of course, they cannot leave them alone entirely) as heap one good wish upon another. *Izvestiya*, the editorship of which is controlled by a *bloc* of the two above-named parties, is characteristic in this respect. No. 63, of May 24 (11), contains two articles on combating economic chaos. The articles are identical in character. One of them has an extremely—how can I put it mildly?—incautious heading (quite as incautious

as the entrance of the Narodniki and Mensheviks into the imperialist cabinet generally): "What Does the Provisional Government Want?" It would be more correct to say: "What the Provisional Government Does *Not* Want and What It Promises."

The second article consists of a "resolution of the Economic Section of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies." Here are a few quotations which will best give an idea of its contents:

"Many branches of industry are ripe for a state trade monopoly (bread, meat, salt, leather); others are ripe for organisation into trusts regulated by the state (coal and oil, metallurgy, sugar, paper); and, finally, present conditions demand in the case of nearly all branches of industry state regulation of the distribution of raw materials and finished products, as well as the fixing of prices. . . . Simultaneously, it is necessary to place all banking institutions under state and public control, with the object of combating speculation in goods subject to state regulation. . . . At the same time, the most energetic measures must be taken to combat parasitism, even to the extent of introducing labour service. . . . The country is already in a state of catastrophe, and the only thing that can save it is the creative effort of the entire people *headed by a government* which has consciously assumed [hem, hem!] the grandiose task of salvaging a country ruined by war and the tsarist regime."

With the exception of the last phrase, beginning with the words we have italicised, which, with purely philistine gullibility, has the capitalists "assume" tasks they are incapable of fulfilling, the programme is an excellent one. Here we have control, state trusts, a fight against speculation, labour conscription—for mercy's sake, where does this differ from terrible Bolshevism, what more do the terrible Bolsheviks want?

That is just the point, that is the whole gist of the matter, that is precisely what the good burghers and philistines of all shades stubbornly refuse to see. They are *forced* to recognise the terrible Bolshevik programme, because no other programme offers an escape from the truly terrible catastrophe which is indeed impending. *But* the capitalists "recognise" this programme (see the famous third paragraph of the declaration of the "new" Provisional Government) *in order not to carry it out*. And the Narodniki and the Mensheviks trust the capitalists, and teach the people to share this fatal trust. That is the whole essence of the political situation.

Control over the trusts, publication of their full reports, imme

diate conferences of their employees, the unconditional participation of the *workers* in the control of the affairs of the trusts, independent control on the part of representatives of every important political party—all this can be effected by a decree requiring but a single day to draft.

What, then, is the hindrance, Citizens Shingarev, Tereshchenko, Konovalov? What is the hindrance, citizens the near-Socialist ministers, Chernov and Tseretelli? What is the hindrance, citizens Narodnik and Menshevik leaders of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies?

We did not propose, nor could anybody have proposed, anything but the *immediate* establishment of control over the trusts, the banks, trade, the *parasites* (a remarkably fine word—by way of exception—from the pen of the editors of *Izvestiya!*), and over foodstuffs. No one could devise anything better than “the creative effort of the entire people.”

Only we must not trust the words of the capitalists; we must not trust the naive (at best, naive) hope of the Mensheviks and the Narodniki that the capitalists can establish such control.

Ruin is threatening. A catastrophe is impending. The capitalists have brought, and are continuing to bring, all countries to their doom. There is only one way of salvation: revolutionary discipline, revolutionary measures by the *revolutionary class*, the proletarians and semi-proletarians, the transfer of the entire power of the state to that class, a class that is really capable of instituting control, that is really capable of successfully “combating parasitism.”

May 27 (14), 1917

INEVITABLE CATASTROPHE—UNLIMITED PROMISES

I

IMMINENT economic ruin is facing us, a catastrophe of unprecedented dimensions, and we must return to the subject again and again in order that its significance may be thoroughly understood. In the last issue of *Pravda* we pointed out that the *programme* of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies now in *no way* differs from the programme of the "terrible" Bolsheviks.¹

Today we must point out that the programme of the Menshevik minister Skobelev goes even beyond Bolshevism. Here is the programme, as reported in the ministerial paper, *Rech*:

"The Minister [Skobelev] declared that '... the state economy is on the verge of a precipice. We must interfere in every branch of the economic life of the country, for there is no money in the treasury. We must improve the conditions of the toiling masses, and to do that we must take the profits from the tills of the business men and bankers.' (*Voice in the audience*: 'How?') 'By ruthless taxation of property,' replied the Minister for Labour, Skobelev. 'It is a method known to the science of finance. The rate of taxation on the propertied classes must be increased to one hundred per cent of their profits.' (*Voice in the audience*: 'That means everything.') 'Unfortunately,' declared Skobelev, 'many corporations have already distributed their dividends among the shareholders, and we must therefore levy a progressive personal tax on the propertied classes. We will go even further, and, if the capitalists wish to preserve the bourgeois method of business, let them work without interest, so as not to lose their clients. . . . We must introduce labour service for the shareholders, bankers and factory owners, who are in a lackadaisical mood, since they have not the incentive that formerly stimulated them to work. . . . We must force the shareholders to submit to the state; they, too, must be subject to labour service.'"

We urge the workers to read and re-read this programme, to discuss it and to try to grasp the conditions necessary for its fulfilment.

¹ Cf. the previous article, "Ruin is Threatening."—Ed.

The whole point lies in the conditions necessary for its fulfilment, and in taking immediate measures for its fulfilment.

This programme in itself is an excellent one and coincides with our Bolshevik programme, except that in one particular it even goes further than our programme, namely, that it promises to "take the profits from the tills of the bankers" to the extent of "one hundred per cent."

Our Party is much more moderate. Its resolution demands much less, namely, the establishment of control over the banks and the "gradual" (just listen, the Bolsheviks are in favour of gradualness!) "transition to a more just and progressive tax on income and property."

Our Party is more moderate than Skobelev.

Skobelev hands out immoderate, nay, unlimited promises, *without understanding the conditions required for their practical realisation.*

That is the whole crux of the matter.

It is *impossible* not only to realise Skobelev's programme, but even to make any serious efforts for its realisation, either arm in arm with the ten ministers from the party of the landowners and the capitalists, or with the bureaucratic, official-ridden machine to which the government of the capitalists (plus a few Mensheviks and Narodniki) is perforce limited.

Less promises, Citizen Skobelev, and more action. Less rhetoric, and more comprehension of *how* to get down to *business*.

And we must get down to business immediately, without losing a single day, if we are to save the country from an inevitable and terrible catastrophe. But the whole point of the matter is that the "new" Provisional Government *does not want* to get down to business; and even if it wanted to, it *could not*, for it is fettered by a thousand chains which safeguard the interests of capital.

We can, and must, this very day call upon the people to get down to business; this very day a decree must be issued *immediately* convoking:

- 1) Soviets and congresses of bank employees, both of individual banks and on a national scale, with the purpose of deciding upon practical measures for merging all banking and credit establish-

ments into a single State Bank, and for the establishment of the most careful control over all banking operations, the results of such control to be published forthwith;

2) Soviets and congresses of employees of all syndicates and trusts, with the purpose of deciding upon measures for control and accountancy; the results of such control to be published forthwith;

3) This decree should grant the right of control not only to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies, but also to Soviets of the workers of every large factory, as well as to the representatives of every large political party (parties to be regarded as large parties, which, for example, on May 25 [12] put forward independent lists of candidates in not less than two Petrograd boroughs); all commercial books and documents to be made accessible to control;

4) The decree should call upon all shareholders, directors and members of the managing boards of all companies to publish the names of all shareholders owning stock to an amount of not less than 10,000 (or 5,000) rubles, with a list of the shares and the companies in which they are "interested"; false statements (subject to the control of the bank and other employees) shall be punished by confiscation of all property and by imprisonment for a term of not less than five years;

5) The decree should call upon the people to establish immediately, through the local organs of government, universal labour service, for the control and realisation of which there shall be established a universal people's militia (in the rural districts directly, in the cities through the workers' militia).

Without universal labour service, the country *cannot be saved* from ruin; and without a people's militia, universal labour service cannot be effected. This will be obvious to everyone who has not reached the stage of ministerial lunacy and who has not become crazed by excessive credulity in ministerial eloquence.

Whoever is really desirous of saving tens of millions of people from ruin must come to the defence of such measures.

In the next article we shall discuss a gradual transition to a more equitable system of taxation, and also how to advance

from among the people and gradually place in ministerial positions truly gifted organisers (both from the workers and from the capitalists) who manifest ability in the performance of the kind of work above described.

II

When Skobelev, in a moment of ministerial abandon, threatened to deprive the capitalists of one hundred per cent of their profits, it was but an example of a phrase calculated for effect. Such phrases are always used to deceive the people in bourgeois parliamentary republics.

But here we have something worse than a mere phrase. "If the capitalists wish to preserve the bourgeois method of business, let them work without interest, so as not to lose their clients," Skobelev said. This sounds like a terrible threat to the capitalists; but in fact, it is an attempt (unconscious probably on the part of Skobelev, but certainly conscious on the part of the capitalists) to *preserve the omnipotence* of capital by a temporary sacrifice of profits.

The workers are taking "too much," reason the capitalists; let us shift the responsibility to them, without giving them either power or the opportunity to control production. Let us, the capitalists, sacrifice our profits for a time; by preserving "the bourgeois method of business," and by "not losing our clients," we shall hasten the collapse of this intermediate state of industry, we shall disorganise it in every possible way and lay the blame on the workers.

That such is the plan of the capitalists is proved by the facts. The coal-owners in the South are actually disorganising production, are "*deliberately neglecting and disorganising*" it (see in *Novaya Zhizn*, for May 29 [16] a report of statements made by a *workers' delegation*). The picture is clear: *Rech* is lying brazenly when it puts the blame on the workers. The coal-owners are "deliberately disorganising production"; and Skobelev sings his nightingale song: "If the capitalists wish to preserve the bourgeois method of business, let them work without interest," The position is clear.

It is to the *advantage* of the capitalists and the bureaucrats to make unlimited promises, and thus divert the attention of the people from the *main thing*, namely, the transfer of real control to the workers.

The workers must sweep aside high-sounding phrases, promises, declarations, projects evolved in the centre by the bureaucrats, who are always ready to draw up the most ostentatious plans, rules, regulations and standards. Down with all this lying! Down with all this hullabaloo of bureaucratic and bourgeois project-mongering that has everywhere collapsed with a crash. Down with this habit of procrastination! The workers must demand the *immediate* establishment of control *in fact*, to be exercised by the *workers themselves*.

That is the main thing required for the success of the cause, the cause of salvation from catastrophe. If that is lacking, everything else is sheer deception. If we have it, we need not be in a hurry to take "one hundred per cent" of the capitalists' profits. We can, and must, be more moderate; we must *gradually* pass to a more just system of taxation; we shall differentiate between small and large shareholders; we shall take *very little* from the former, and a great deal (but *not* necessarily all) from the latter *only*. The number of large shareholders is insignificant; but the role they play, like the wealth they possess, is *enormous*. It may safely be said that if one were to draw up a list of the five thousand or even three thousand (or perhaps even one thousand) richest men in Russia, or if one were to investigate (by means of control exercised from *below*, by bank, syndicate, and other employees), all the threads and ties of their finance capital, their banking connections, one would expose the whole knot of capitalist domination, the bulk of the wealth accumulated at the expense of the labour of others, and all the really important sources of "control" over social production and distribution of goods.

This control must be entrusted to the workers. It is this knot, these sources, that the interests of capital demand shall be concealed from the people. Better forego for a time "all" our profits, or ninety-nine per cent of our income, than disclose to the people

these roots of our power—thus reason the capitalist class and its unconscious servant, the government official.

Under no circumstances shall *we* renounce our right and our demand that the main fortress of finance capital be opened to the people, that this fortress be placed under workers' control—thus the class conscious worker reasons, and will continue to reason. And every passing day will prove the correctness of this reasoning to ever greater masses of the poor, to an ever increasing majority of the people, to an ever larger number of sincere people generally, people who are honestly seeking an escape from disaster.

The main fortress of finance capital must be seized. Otherwise, all phrases, all projects for averting disaster are sheer deception. As to the individual capitalists, or even the majority of capitalists, the proletariat, far from intending to "strip" them (as Shulgin has been "scaring" himself and his friends), far from intending to deprive them of "everything," on the contrary, intends to charge them with a useful and honourable task—under the control of the workers.

When an inevitable catastrophe is impending, the most useful, the most indispensable thing for the people is *organisation*. Miracles of proletarian organisation—that is our slogan now, and will become still more our slogan and demand when the proletariat is in power. Without the organisation of the masses it will be absolutely impossible to establish universal labour service, which is absolutely essential, or any serious control over the banks, the syndicates and the production and distribution of goods.

That is why it is necessary to begin, and begin immediately, with a workers' militia, in order that we may proceed gradually, but firmly and intelligently, to the creation of a people's militia and the replacement of the police and the standing army by the universally armed people. That is why it is necessary to advance talented organisers from among *all* strata of society, from among *all* classes, not excepting the capitalists, who *at present* have more of the required experience. There are many such talented individuals among the people. Such forces lie dormant in the peasantry and the proletariat, lacking an outlet. They must be promoted

from below in the course of practical work, such as in efficiently eliminating queues, in skilfully organising house committees, in organising domestic servants, in creating model farms, in putting factories taken over by the workers on a sound basis, and so on, and so forth. Having advanced such talented individuals from below in the course of practical work, and having tested their ability in practice, we must promote them all to "ministers"—not in the old sense of the term, not in the sense of rewarding them with a portfolio, but in the sense of appointing them instructors of the people, travelling organisers, assistants *everywhere* aiding in the work of establishing the strictest order, the greatest economy in human labour, the strictest comradely discipline.

That is what the party of the proletariat must preach to the people as the means of salvation from catastrophe. That is what it must already begin in part to carry into effect in those localities where it has gained power. That is what it must carry into effect completely when it achieves state power.

May 29-30 (16-17), 1917

SPEECH ON THE WAR

Delivered at the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, June 22, (9), 1917

COMRADES, allow me, by way of introduction to an examination of the war question, to recall to your minds two passages in the manifesto addressed to all the countries issued on March 27 (14) by the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

"The time has come," the manifesto reads, "to begin a resolute struggle against the predatory aspirations of the governments of all countries; the time has come for the peoples to take the question of war and peace into their own hands."

The other passage in the manifesto is addressed to the workers of the Austro-German coalition and reads:

"Refuse to serve as the instruments of depredation and violence of kings, landlords, and bankers."

These two passages are reiterated in various forms in tens, in hundreds, I think in thousands, of resolutions passed by the workers and peasants of Russia.

To my mind, these two passages, better than anything else, reveal the contradictory and hopelessly entangled situation into which the workers and peasants have fallen owing to the present policy of the Mensheviks and the Narodniki. On the one hand, they are for supporting the war; on the other, they are representatives of classes that have no interest in the predatory aspirations of the governments of all the countries, and cannot help saying so. This psychology and ideology, even if vague, is extremely deep-seated in every worker and peasant. It is a realisation of the fact that the war is being waged on behalf of the predatory aspirations of the governments of all countries. But, together with this, there is an extremely hazy understanding, or a total lack of understand-

ing, of the fact that a government, whatever its form, is an expression of the interests of definite classes, and that, therefore, to contrast the government with the people, as is done in the first passage I have quoted, is the height of theoretical confusion and utter political helplessness, a condemnation of oneself and one's entire policy to a shaky, unstable position and conduct. The same applies to the concluding words of the second passage I have quoted. That excellent admonition "Refuse to serve as the instruments of depredation and violence of kings, landlords and bankers" is splendid; but the words "and we of our own" are omitted. For when you, Russian workers and peasants, appeal to the workers and peasants of Austria and Germany, where the governments and ruling classes are conducting the same cut-throat, predatory war as the Russian, British and French capitalists and bankers; when you say, "Refuse to serve as the instruments of your bankers," while at the same time you admit your own bankers into the cabinet and seat them side by side with Socialist ministers, you are reducing all your manifestoes to naught and are in practice negating your whole policy. In practice it is as though you never had these excellent aspirations and wishes; for you are helping Russia carry on exactly the same sort of imperialist war, exactly the same sort of predatory war. You are contradicting the very masses whom you represent, for those masses will never accept the standpoint of the capitalists, so frankly expressed by Milyukov, Maklakov and others, who say: "There is no idea more criminal than that the war is being waged in the interests of capital."

I do not know whether this idea is criminal, but I have no doubt that it is criminal in the opinion of those who only half exist today and who tomorrow perhaps will not exist at all. Yet it is the only sound idea. It alone expresses our conception of this war; it alone declares that the interests of the oppressed classes demand war on the oppressors. And when we say that the war is a capitalist war, a predatory war, and that we must not harbour illusions, we do not in the least suggest that the crimes of individual persons, of individual kings, could have brought about this war.

Imperialism is a definite stage in the development of world

capital. Capitalism, after decades of growth, has reached a point where a small group of overwhelmingly rich countries—not more than four: Great Britain, France, Germany and America—have amassed vast wealth, wealth measured in hundreds of billions, have concentrated vast power in the hands of a few big bankers and big capitalists—there are half a dozen of them at most in each of these countries—have accumulated a gigantic power, which has seized the whole world, and has literally partitioned the whole globe as far as territories and colonies are concerned. The colonies of these powers are to be found side by side in all parts of the globe. They have also divided the globe among themselves economically, for there is not a piece of land anywhere in the world where concessions and the threads of finance capital have not penetrated. That is the basis of annexations. Annexations are not products of the imagination, they are not due to the fact that freedom-loving people suddenly became reactionaries. Annexations are but the political expression and the political form of the domination of the giant banks which inevitably followed from capitalism, not owing to anyone's fault, but owing to the fact that shares are the basis of banks and the accumulation of shares is the basis of imperialism. Huge banks ruling the whole world by the force of hundreds of billions of capital and uniting entire branches of industry by means of capitalist and monopolist combines—there you have the imperialism which has split the whole world into three groups of overwhelmingly wealthy plunderers.

At the head of one, the first group, the one nearest to us in Europe, stands Great Britain; at the head of the other two are Germany and America respectively, the rest, as long as capitalist relations persist, being constrained to help. Hence, if you clearly conceive this essential fact, a fact instinctively grasped by every oppressed individual, instinctively grasped by the vast majority of Russian workers and peasants—if you clearly conceive this fact, you will understand how ridiculous it is to think of fighting the war by words, manifestoes, proclamations and Socialist congresses. It is ridiculous, because, no matter how many declarations you issue, no matter how many political revolutions you effect, the banks remain omnipotent, even though you have overthrown Nicho-

las Romanov in Russia. Russia has made a gigantic step forward; she has perhaps at a single stride overtaken France, which, under different circumstances, accomplished the same thing in one hundred years, and nevertheless remained a capitalist country. The capitalists still remain. If they are somewhat circumscribed, so were they in 1905. But did that undermine their power? It is new to the Russians, but in Europe every revolution proved that with each rise of the revolutionary wave the workers gain a little more, but the capitalists retain power. The fight against the imperialist war can be waged only as a fight of the revolutionary classes against the ruling classes on a world-wide scale. It is not the landlords who created imperialism, although there are landlords in Russia, and although the landlords in Russia are more influential than in any other country. It is the capitalist class headed by the great financial magnates and banks. And as long as this class, which dominates over the oppressed proletarians, is not overthrown, there can be no escape from this war. The illusion that one can unite the toilers of the world by means of proclamations and appeals to other peoples is possible only from the limited Russian point of view, which knows nothing of the manner in which the press of Western Europe, where the workers and peasants are used to political revolutions and have seen them dozens of times, scoffs at such phrases and appeals. In Europe they do not know that the working class masses of Russia, who sincerely believe that the aspirations of the capitalists of the world are predatory and condemn them, and who desire the liberation of the peoples from the bankers, have actually risen. But they, the Europeans, cannot understand why you, who have organisations such as no other people in the world possess, the Soviets of Workers', Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies, why you, who have arms, send your Socialists to be cabinet ministers. You are, after all, surrendering the power of government to the bankers. Abroad they accuse you not so much of naïveté—that would not be so bad—but of hypocrisy. The Europeans no longer understand naïveté in politics, they cannot understand that in Russia there are tens of millions of people who for the first time are awakening to life, that in Russia the connection is not understood be-

tween classes and the government, between the government and the war.

War is but a continuation of bourgeois policy, and nothing more. The ruling class determines policy also in war. War is nothing but politics, it is a continuation of the pursuit by these classes of the same ends by different means. Therefore, when in your appeal to the workers and peasants you say, "Overthrow your bankers," every class conscious European worker either laughs, or bitterly weeps, and says to himself: "What can we do, if over there they have overthrown their monarch, a half-savage idiot and monster, the kind we removed long ago—and that is the whole of our crime—and are now with the help of their 'near-Socialist' ministers supporting the Russian bankers?"

The bankers have remained in power, and are conducting their foreign policy by means of the imperialist war, supporting every one of the treaties concluded in Russia by Nicholas II. In this country it is particularly glaring. The principles of Russia's imperialist foreign policy were determined not now, but by the former government headed by Nicholas Romanov, whom we have deposed. It was he who concluded these treaties, and these treaties still remain secret. The capitalists cannot publish them, because they are capitalists. But not a single worker or peasant can understand this tangle; for he reasons that if we urge the overthrow of the capitalists in other countries, then we ought first of all to overthrow our own bankers; otherwise no one will believe us or take us seriously. They will say of us: "You Russians are naive savages, you write words which in themselves are excellent, but which have no practical meaning." Or, worse, they may think we are hypocrites. You would indeed find such arguments in the foreign press, were the press of all shades allowed to cross the Russian border, and not held up in Torneo¹ by the British and French authorities. From a mere selection of quotations from foreign newspapers you would realise into what a glaring contradiction you have fallen; you would convince yourselves how incredibly ludicrous and erroneous is the idea of fighting war by means of Socialist conferences and agreements between Socialists at con-

¹ A Finnish frontier town.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

gresses. Were imperialism due to the fault or the crime of individual persons, socialism would remain but a name. Imperialism is the last stage in the evolution of capitalism, in which it has already divided the whole world into bits, and in which two gigantic groups have joined in a struggle for life and death. Either serve one or the other of these groups, or overthrow both; there is no other alternative. When you oppose a separate peace on the pretext that you do not wish to serve German imperialism, you are absolutely right; that is why we too are against a separate peace. But, as a matter of fact, despite yourselves, you go on serving Anglo-French imperialism and its aims, which are as predatory and annexatory as those which the Russian capitalists, with the help of Nicholas Romanov, embodied in the treaties. We do not know the text of these treaties, but anyone who has followed political literature, who has read a single book on economics or diplomacy, knows the content of these treaties. Ay, and Milyukov, if my memory serves me, wrote in his books of these treaties and promises that they would despoil Galicia, the Dardanelles, Armenia, preserve the old annexations and obtain a heap of new ones. That is known to everyone; yet the treaties are kept secret, and we are told that to denounce them would mean breaking with the Allies.

As regards a separate peace, I have already stated that there can be no separate peace for us, and the resolution of our Party leaves no shadow of doubt that we reject it, as we reject every kind of agreement with the capitalists. For us a separate peace means an agreement with the German robbers, who are plundering just as much as the others. But an agreement with Russian capital in the Russian Provisional Government is also a separate peace. The tsarist treaties are still in force, and they also plunder and stifle other peoples. When I hear the words, "peace without annexations or indemnities"—words every Russian worker and peasant should utter, because events are teaching him to utter them, because he is not interested in banking profits and because he wants to live—I reply that this slogan has utterly confused the Narodnik and Menshevik leaders of the present Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. They have explained in *Izvestiya* that this

implies the *status quo*, i.e., the pre-war situation, a return to what existed before the war. Is that not a capitalist peace? And what a capitalist peace! If you advance such a slogan, bear it in mind that the course of events may place your parties in power. That is possible in revolutionary times. You will have to fulfil your promises, and if you now propose a peace without annexations, it may be accepted by the Germans but not by the British; for the British capitalists have not lost one inch of ground; on the contrary, they have plundered all over the world. The Germans have plundered a good deal, but they have also lost a good deal, and not only have they lost a good deal, but they are faced with the intervention of America, a most formidable foe. If you, who are proposing peace without annexations, imply by that the *status quo*, you sink to a position where your proposal implies a separate peace with the capitalists. For if you propose the *status quo*, then the German capitalists, confronted with America and Italy, with whom they had once made treaties, will say: "Yes, we accept this peace without annexations; for us it is not a defeat, for us it is a victory over America and Italy." It is you who in fact are sinking to a separate peace with the capitalists, of which you accuse us; for in your policy, your deeds, your practical measures, you are not breaking in principle with the bankers, who are the representatives of imperialist domination all over the world, and whom you and your "Socialist" ministers are supporting in the Provisional Government.

Thereby you are placing yourselves in such a self-contradictory and shaky position that the masses cannot understand you. The masses, who have no interest in annexations, declare: "We do not want to fight for any capitalists." When we are told that such a policy can be stopped by congresses and agreements among the Socialists of all countries, we say: "Perhaps so, if imperialism were the work of individual criminals; but imperialism is the evolution of world capitalism, with which the working class movement is connected."

The victory of imperialism is the beginning of an inevitable, unavoidable division of the Socialists into two camps in every country. Whoever continues to regard the Socialists as a single entity, who thinks they might be a single entity, is deceiving him-

self and deceiving others. The whole course of the war, the whole course of the two and a half years of war, have led to this split, ever since the Basle Manifesto, which was signed unanimously, declared that war is a product of imperialist capitalism. There is not a word about "national defence" in the Basle Manifesto. No other manifesto could have been written before the war—just as at present no Socialist would propose to write a manifesto on "national defence" in case of a war between America and Japan, where neither his own skin nor his capitalists and ministers would be involved. Just try. Just write a resolution for international congresses! You know that war between Japan and America is imminent; it has been in preparation for decades, it is not fortuitous, and tactics will not depend on who fires the first shot. It is ridiculous! You know full well that American and Japanese capitalists are both equally predatory. But both sides will call for "national defence"; that will be either a crime or a terrible weakness committed in "defence" of the interests of our capitalist enemies. That is why we say that the split among the Socialists is irreparable. The Socialists have completely deserted socialism, they have gone over to the side of their governments, their bankers, their capitalists, in spite of their verbal denunciation and condemnation of the latter. Condemnation means nothing. But sometimes condemnation of the Germans for supporting their capitalists is merely a shield for the same "sin" on the part of the Russians! If you condemn the German social-chauvinists, *i.e.*, people who are Socialists in word—perhaps many of them are Socialists at heart—but chauvinists in deed, who in deed are defending not the German people but the filthy, greedy, predatory German capitalists, then do not defend the British, French and Russian capitalists! The German social-chauvinists are no worse than those who in our government are continuing this policy of secret treaties and of plunder, and disguising that policy by innocent good wishes. Those wishes may have much good in them, and on the part of the masses I regard them as absolutely sincere, but I do not and cannot discern a single word of political truth in them. They are only your wishes; but the war remains an imperialist war, a war on behalf of the secret treaties! You call upon other peoples to overthrow their

bankers, yet you support your own bankers! You spoke of peace, but you did not say what kind of peace! When we pointed to the glaring contradiction in a peace on the basis of the *status quo*, we received no reply. In your resolution which will speak of a peace without annexations, you will not be able to say that it is not the *status quo*. You will not be able to say that it is the *status quo*, i.e. the restoration of the pre-war situation. What, then? Deprive Great Britain of the German colonies? Just try to do it by peaceful agreement! Everybody will laugh at you. Just try, without a revolution, to take away from Japan Kiaochow and the Pacific Islands she has stolen.

You have become entangled in inextricable contradictions. When we, however, say "without annexations," this slogan is for us but a subordinate part of the struggle against world imperialism. We say that we want to free all nations, and that we mean to begin with our own. You talk of war against annexations and of a peace without annexations; yet within Russia you continue to conduct an annexationist policy. That is monstrous! You, and your government, your new ministers, are in practice carrying on an annexationist policy in regard to Finland and the Ukraine. You are finding fault with the Ukrainian Congress, through your ministers you are prohibiting its session. What is that if not annexation? Such a policy is a mockery of the rights of a nationality that suffered tortures under the tsars because its children wanted to use their native tongue. It means that you are afraid of independent republics. From the point of view of the workers and peasants there is nothing terrible in them. Let Russia be a union of free republics. The worker and peasant masses will not fight to prevent that. Let all nationalities be liberated, first and foremost those nationalities with the help of which you are making the revolution in Russia. Unless you do this, you are condemning yourselves to be "revolutionary democracy" only in words, while in practice your whole policy spells counter-revolution.

Your foreign policy is anti-democratic and counter-revolutionary whereas a revolutionary policy might place you in a position where a revolutionary war would be indispensable. But that need not necessarily be the case. Of late this point has been much stressed by speakers and by the press. I should like to dwell on it.

What practical way out of this war do we see? We say, the only way out of this war is revolution. Support the revolution of the classes oppressed by the capitalists, overthrow the class of capitalists in your own country, and thereby set an example for other countries. That alone is socialism. That is the only way to fight the war. Everything else is promises or phrases, or innocent, pious wishes. Socialism has been rent in twain in every country of the world. But you remain entangled when you associate with those Socialists who are supporting their own governments and forget that in England and Germany the real Socialists, those who express the socialism of the masses, have been left isolated and are languishing in prison. But they alone express the interests of the proletarian movement. Suppose in Russia the oppressed class were to find itself in power? When we are asked, "How will you tear yourselves free from the war alone?" we say that to tear oneself free from the war alone is impossible. Every resolution of our Party, every speech of our orators at meetings says that it is absurd to imagine that one can tear oneself free from this war alone. Hundreds of millions of people, hundreds of billions of capital are involved in this war. There is no way out of the war except by the transfer of power to the revolutionary class, a class which is bound to destroy imperialism, *i.e.*, the financial, banking, and annexationist ties. Unless this is done, nothing is done. The revolution reduces itself to this, that in place of tsarism and imperialism you now have a near-republic, which is imperialist through and through and which, even in the persons of the representatives of the revolutionary workers and peasants, cannot treat Finland and the Ukraine democratically, *i.e.*, without fearing secession.

When it is said that we are striving for a separate peace, that is untrue. We say, no separate peace with any capitalists, particularly with the Russian capitalists! But the Provisional Government has made a separate peace with the Russian capitalists. Down with that separate peace! We do not recognise any separate peace with the German capitalists and will enter into no negotiations with them; but neither do we want a separate peace with the

British and French imperialists. We are told that a break with the latter would mean entering into an agreement with the German imperialists. That is not true; we must break with them immediately, for it is an alliance of robbery. We are told that the treaties must not be published, for that would heap disgrace upon our government and upon our whole policy in the eyes of the workers and peasants. If these treaties were published and the Russian workers and the Russian peasants were clearly told at meetings, particularly in every remote little village: "This is what you are now fighting for: for the Dardanelles, for the retention of Armenia," every one of them would reply: "We do not want such a war."

Chairman: Your time is up.

Voices: Please continue.

Lenin: Another ten minutes.

Voices: Please, please.

Lenin: I say that it is wrong to pose the dilemma: either with the British imperialists or with the German imperialists; peace with the German imperialists means war with the British imperialists, and *vice versa*. Such a dilemma suits the purpose of those who do not break with their capitalists and bankers and who are ready to consent to any form of alliance with them. But it does not suit us. We are for protecting our alliance with the oppressed classes, with the oppressed nationalities. If you remain faithful to that alliance you will be revolutionary democrats. That is not an easy task. That task does not permit one to forget that under certain circumstances a revolutionary war may be essential. No revolutionary class can forswear revolutionary war without dooming itself to a ludicrous pacifism. We are not Tolstoyans! If the revolutionary class takes power, if no annexed territories remain in its state, if banks and big capital are deprived of power—no easy thing in Russia—that revolutionary class will be waging a revolutionary war not in word but in real earnest. We cannot forswear such a war, for that would be Tolstoyism, philistinism, it would be forgetting the whole science of Marxism and the experience of all European revolutions.

Russia by herself cannot be stricken out of the war. But she has mighty allies growing, who at present have no faith in you,

because your position is either self-contradictory or naive, for you advise other nations to renounce annexations, while you are introducing them in your own country. You say to other nations, "Overthrow the bankers." But you do not overthrow your own bankers. Try a different policy. Publish the treaties and expose them to the contempt of the workers and peasants. Say: "No peace with the German capitalists and a complete break with the Anglo-French capitalists! Let the British get out of Turkey, and let them not fight for Bagdad! ¹ Let them get out of India and Egypt! We do not want to fight to preserve plundered loot, nor will we expend one atom of our energy to help the German brigands preserve their loot." If you do that, and you said you would—in politics words are not believed, and with good reason—if you not only say but actually do these things, then the allies we now have will make themselves felt. Just consider the sentiments of the oppressed workers and peasants—they sympathise with you and regret that you are so weak that, having arms, you let the bankers remain. Your allies are the oppressed workers of all countries. There will come to pass what the Revolution of 1905 revealed. At the outset it was terribly weak. But what were its results internationally? How did this policy and the history of 1905 determine the foreign policy of the Russian revolution? At present you are conducting the foreign policy of the Russian revolution in complete accord with the capitalists. But 1905 has shown what the foreign policy of the Russian revolution should be. The fact is indisputable that after October 30 (17), 1905, mass disturbances broke out and barricades were erected in the streets of Vienna and Prague. Following 1905 there came 1908 in Turkey, 1909 in Persia and 1910 in China. If you appeal to the real revolutionary democracy, the working class and the oppressed, instead of compromising with the capitalists, your allies will be not the oppressing, but the oppressed classes, not the nations where the oppressing classes are temporarily predominant, but the nations that are now being torn to pieces.

¹ *Bagdad*—before the war belonged to Turkey. The capital of the Irak, over which Great Britain now has the mandate.—*Ed.*

We have been reminded here of the German front, concerning which none of us has suggested any change, except the free distribution of our leaflets, which are printed on one side in Russian and on the other in German, and which say: "The capitalists of both countries are robbers; only their removal will be a step towards peace." But there are other fronts. We have an army on the Turkish front; its numerical strength I do not know. If this army, now kept in Armenia and perpetrating annexations which you tolerate, while preaching a peace without annexations to other peoples, although you have the strength and the authority; if that army adopted this programme, if it turned Armenia into an independent Armenian republic and gave that republic the money that is being taken from us by the French and British financiers, that would be much better! It is said that we cannot get along without the financial support of England and France. But that support supports us as the rope supports a hanged man. Let the revolutionary class of Russia say: "Down with such support, we do not recognise the debts contracted with the French and British capitalists, we call upon all to rise against the capitalists! No peace with the German capitalists, and no alliance with the British and French capitalists!" If such a policy were pursued in practice, our Turkish army would be free to turn to other fronts, for all the peoples of Asia would see that not only in word are the Russian people proclaiming a peace without annexations on the basis of national self-determination, but that the Russian workers and peasants are in actual practice assuming the lead of all the oppressed nationalities, and that the struggle against imperialism is for them not an empty wish or a glittering ministerial phrase, but a matter of vital revolutionary importance.

Our situation is such that a revolutionary war may threaten but is not inevitable, for the British imperialists will scarcely be able to wage war upon us, if you appeal to the peoples surrounding Russia with your practical example. Show that you are liberating the republic of Armenia, that you are concluding agreements with the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of all countries, that you are for a free republic, and the foreign policy of the Russian revolution will become truly revolutionary and truly

democratic. At present it is such only in word, while in fact it is counter-revolutionary; for you are bound by Anglo-French imperialism and do not wish to say so openly, are afraid to admit it. Instead of calling upon others to overthrow their bankers, it would be better were you frankly to say to the Russian people, to the workers and peasants: "We are too weak, we cannot throw off the yoke of the Anglo-French imperialists, we are their slaves, that is why we are in the war." That would be a bitter truth, and it would have revolutionary significance, it would actually bring nearer the end of this predatory war. That would mean a thousand times more than an agreement with the French and British social-chauvinists, than the convocation of congresses, than the continuation of this policy in which you are in fact afraid to break with the imperialists of one country while remaining the allies of another. You may rely on the oppressed classes of the European countries, on the oppressed peoples of weaker countries who were throttled by Russia under the tsars, and are being throttled by her now, as is the case with Armenia. If you rely on them, you may grant freedom and help their workers' and peasants' committees; you would become the leader of all oppressed classes, of all oppressed nations in their war against German and British imperialism. The latter cannot unite against you, for they themselves are engaged in a life-and-death struggle against each other, for they are themselves in a hopelessly difficult situation; whereas the foreign policy of the Russian revolution, a sincere alliance with the oppressed classes and oppressed nations, is likely to be successful; there are a hundred chances to one that it will be successful!

In the Moscow paper of our Party, we recently came across a letter from a peasant in which he expounds our programme. I shall take the liberty of concluding my speech with a brief quotation from this letter, which shows how this peasant understood our programme. The letter appeared in No. 59 of *Sotsial-Demokrat*, the Moscow paper of our Party, and was reprinted in No. 68 of *Pravda*:

"We must press harder on the bourgeoisie until it bursts at every seam, and then the war will end. But if we do not press hard enough on the bourgeoisie, it will be bad."

THE EIGHTEENTH OF JUNE

IN one way or another, in the annals of the Russian revolution the Eighteenth of June will be regarded as a day of crisis.

The relative position of classes, their interrelation in the struggle, their strength, particularly in comparison with the strength of the Party, were revealed so distinctly, so strikingly, so impressively by the demonstration of Sunday last, that, whatever the course and speed of further development may be, the gain in respect of conscious understanding and clarity has been tremendous.

The demonstration in a few hours scattered to the winds the vapid talk about Bolshevik conspirators, and showed incontestably that the vanguard of the toiling masses of Russia, the industrial proletariat in the capital, and the army, in their overwhelming majority support slogans that our Party has always advocated.

The measured step of the battalions of workers and soldiers. Nearly half a million demonstrators. Unity and solidarity of action, unity of slogans, among which the slogans "All power to the Soviets," "Down with the ten capitalist ministers," "Neither a separate peace with the Germans nor secret treaties with the Anglo-French capitalists," etc., were overwhelmingly predominant. No one who saw the demonstration has now any doubt that these slogans have successfully won the support of the organised vanguard of the worker and soldier masses of Russia.

The demonstration of July 1 (June 18) assumed the character of a demonstration of the strength and policy of the revolutionary proletariat, which is pointing the direction for the revolution and indicating the way out of the impasse. That is the colossal historical significance of the demonstration of last Sunday, and therein it differs essentially from the demonstration on

the day of the funeral of the victims of the revolution and the demonstration of the First of May. Those demonstrations were a universal *tribute* to the first victory of the revolution and to its heroes; they were a retrospective glance cast by the people over the first stage of the road to freedom, which had been passed so rapidly and so successfully. The First of May was a holiday, a day of hope and good wishes, associated with the history of the international labour movement and with its ideal of peace and socialism.

Neither of the demonstrations attempted, or could attempt, to point the *direction* for the further movement of the revolution. Neither of the demonstrations attempted to place before the masses, or raise in the name of the masses, the concrete, definite and urgent questions of how and whither the revolution should proceed.

In this sense July 1 (June 18) was the first political demonstration of *action*: it was an exposition of how the various classes act, desire to act, and will act in order to further the revolution, an exposition given not in a book or a newspaper, but on the streets; not by leaders, but by the masses.

The bourgeoisie kept out of the way. In this peaceful demonstration of an admitted majority of the people, in which there was freedom of party slogans, and the chief aim of which was to protest against counter-revolution, the bourgeoisie refused to participate. That is natural. The bourgeoisie is the counter-revolution. It hides from the people; it organises regular counter-revolutionary conspiracies against the people. The parties now ruling Russia, the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, patently revealed themselves on the historic day of July 1 (June 18) as parties of indecision. Their slogans spoke of hesitation, and the supporters of their slogans were clearly and obviously in a minority. By their slogans and vacillations *they* advised the people to remain where they were, to leave everything unchanged for the time being. And the people felt, as they themselves felt, that that was impossible.

Enough of vacillation—the vanguard of the proletariat, the vanguard of the worker and soldier masses of Russia declared. Enough of vacillation. The policy of faith in the capitalists, in

their government, in *their* reformist exertions, in *their* war, in *their* policy of an offensive—that policy is hopeless. Its collapse is imminent. Its collapse is inevitable. And that collapse will also be the collapse of the ruling parties, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. Economic ruin is imminent. There is *no* escaping it, except by revolutionary measures of the revolutionary class after it has assumed power.

The people must renounce the policy of trusting the capitalists; they must place their confidence in the revolutionary class—the proletariat, which is the only source of power. It alone is the pledge that the interests of the *majority* will be served, the interests of the toilers and the exploited, who have been crushed by war and capital, but who are capable of triumphing over war and capital.

A crisis of unprecedented dimensions is descending upon Russia and upon the whole of humanity. The only escape is to place confidence in the most organised and advanced section of the toilers and exploited and to support its policy.

Whether the people will grasp this lesson soon, and how they will put it into effect, we do not know. But we know for certain that apart from this lesson there is no escape from the impasse, that possible vacillations and brutalities on the part of the counter-revolutionaries will lead nowhere.

There is no way out unless the masses of the people place complete faith in their leader, the proletariat.

July 3 (June 20), 1917

ON SLOGANS

Too often has it happened when history has taken a sharp turn that even the most advanced of parties have been unable for a long time to adapt themselves to the new situation; they continued to repeat the slogans that were formerly true, but which now had no meaning, having lost that meaning as "suddenly" as the turn in history was "sudden."

Something of the sort may, apparently, repeat itself in connection with the slogan regarding the transfer of the entire power of the state to the Soviets. That slogan was correct during a period of our revolution—say from March 12 (February 27) to July 17 (4)—that has now passed irrevocably. That slogan has patentely ceased to be true now. Unless this is understood, it is impossible to understand anything of the urgent questions of the present time. Every particular slogan must be derived from the entire complex of specific peculiarities of the given political situation. And the political situation in Russia now, after July 17 (4), differs radically from the situation of March 12 (February 27) to July 17 (4).

During that, now past, period of our revolution what is known as a dual power prevailed in the state, which both materially and formally expressed the indefinite and transitory nature of the state power. Let us not forget that the question of power is the fundamental question of every revolution.

At that time the state power was in a condition of instability. It was shared, by voluntary consent, by the Provisional Government and the Soviets. The Soviets were composed of delegations from the mass of free (i.e., not subject to external coercion) and armed workers and soldiers. The *essence* of the situation was that the arms were in the hands of the people, and that no coercion was exercised over the people from without. That is what opened up and ensured a peaceful path for the development of the revolu-

tion. The slogan, "All power to the Soviets," was a slogan for the next immediate step, which could be directly effected in this peaceful path of development. It was a slogan for a peaceful development of the revolution, which was possible between March 12 (February 27) and July 17 (4), and which was, of course, most desirable, but which now is absolutely impossible.

Apparently, not all the supporters of the slogan, "All power to the Soviets," have given sufficient thought to the circumstance that it was a slogan for a peaceful development of the revolution. It was peaceful not only in the sense that nobody, no class, no single force of any importance, was able then—between March 12 (February 27) and July 17 (4)—to resist or prevent the transfer of power to the Soviets. That is not all. Peaceful development would then have been possible even in the sense that the struggle of classes and parties *within* the Soviets could have assumed a most peaceful and painless form, provided the state power in its entirety had passed to the Soviets in good time.

This aspect of the case has also not yet received sufficient attention. The Soviets in their class composition were organs of the movement of the workers and peasants, the ready-made form of their dictatorship. Had they possessed the entire state power, the main shortcoming of the petty-bourgeois strata, their chief sin, namely, confidence in the capitalists, would have been overcome in practice, would have been subjected to the criticism of the experience of their own measures. The substitution of classes and parties in power could have proceeded peacefully within the Soviets, based upon the sole and undivided power of the latter. The contact of all the Soviet parties with the masses could have remained stable and unimpaired. One must not for a single moment forget that only such a close contact between the Soviet parties and the masses, freely growing in extent and depth, could have helped the petty bourgeoisie peacefully to outlive their deluded faith in compromises with the bourgeoisie. The transfer of power to the Soviets would not, and could not, of itself have changed the interrelation of classes; it would not in any way have changed the petty-bourgeois nature of the peasantry. But it would have made a big and timely step towards severing the peasants from the bour-

geoisie, towards bringing them closer to, and then uniting them with, the workers.

This is what might have been had power passed in good time to the Soviets. That would have been the most easy, the most advantageous course for the people. Such a course would have been the least painful, and it was therefore necessary to fight for it most energetically. Now, however, this struggle, the struggle for the timely transfer of power to the Soviets, has ended. A peaceful course of development has been rendered impossible. The non-peaceful and most painful course has begun.

The critical change of July 17 (4) consists precisely in the fact that the objective situation took an abrupt turn. The unstable situation in regard to the state power has come to an end; the power at the decisive point has passed into the hands of the counter-revolution. The development of the parties on the basis of a compromise between the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks and the counter-revolutionary Cadets has brought about a situation in which both these petty-bourgeois parties have in practice become the aiders and abettors of counter-revolutionary butchery. The unenlightened confidence of the petty bourgeoisie in the capitalists has led the former, in the course of the development of the struggle of parties, to deliberately and consciously support the counter-revolutionaries. The cycle of development of party relations is complete. On March 12 (February 27) all classes were united against the monarchy. After July 17 (4), the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, working hand in glove with the monarchists and the Black Hundreds, secured the support of the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, partly by intimidating them, and handed over the actual state power to the Cavaignacs, the military ruffians, who are shooting insubordinate soldiers at the front and dealing ruthlessly with the Bolsheviks in Petrograd.

The slogan of transferring the state power to the Soviets would now sound quixotic, or a sheer mockery. This slogan would be a virtual fraud on the people; it would be inspiring them with the delusion that it is enough *even now* for the Soviets merely to wish to take power, or to proclaim it, in order to secure power,

that there are still parties in the Soviet which have not been tainted by aiding the butchers, and that it is possible to undo the past.

It would be a profound error to think that the revolutionary proletariat is capable of "refusing" to support the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks against the counter-revolution in "revenge," so to speak, for the support they gave in smashing the Bolsheviks, in shooting down soldiers at the front and in disarming the workers. First, this would be ascribing philistine conceptions of morality to the proletariat (since, *for the good of the cause*, the proletariat will always support not only the vacillating petty bourgeoisie but even the big bourgeoisie); and secondly—and that is the main thing—it would be a philistine attempt to substitute "moralising" for the true political issue.

And the true political issue consists in the fact that power can now no longer be taken peacefully. It can be obtained only by victory in a decisive struggle against the real holders of power at the present moment, namely, the military ruffians, the Cavaignacs, who are relying on the reactionary troops brought to Petrograd and on the Cadets and the monarchists.

The true political issue consists in the fact that these new holders of state power can be defeated only by the revolutionary masses of the people, whose movement depends not only on their being led by the proletariat, but also on their turning their backs upon the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, which have betrayed the cause of the revolution.

Those who bring philistine morals into politics reason as follows: Let us assume that it is true that the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks committed an "error" in supporting the Cavaignacs, who are disarming the proletariat and the revolutionary regiments; still, we must give them a chance to "rectify" their "error"; we must not make it difficult for them to rectify their "error"; we must make it easier for the petty bourgeoisie to incline towards the side of the workers. Such reasoning is childishly naive or simply stupid, or else a new fraud on the workers. For if the petty-bourgeois masses inclined towards the workers it would mean, and could only mean, that these masses had turned

their backs upon the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. The Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties could rectify their "error" now only by denouncing Tseretelli, Chernov, Dan and Rakitnikov as aiders and abettors of the butchers. We are fully and unconditionally in favour of their error being "rectified" in that way. . . .

We said that the fundamental question of revolution is the question of power. We must add that revolutions at every step illustrate how the question of *where* the actual power lies is beclouded, and reveal the divergence between formal power and real power. That is one of the chief characteristics of every revolutionary period. In March and April 1917, it was not clear whether the real power was in the hands of the government or in the hands of the Soviets.

Now, however, it is particularly essential that the class conscious workers should soberly face the fundamental question of the revolution, namely: Who holds the state power at the present moment? Consider its material manifestations, do not accept words for deeds, and you will have no difficulty in finding the answer.

The state consists, first of all, of detachments of armed men with material appurtenances, such as jails, wrote Frederick Engels. Now it consists of the military cadets and the reactionary Cossacks, who have been specially brought to Petrograd; it consists of those who keep Kamenev and others in jail; who have shut down the newspaper *Pravda*; who have disarmed the workers and a definite section of the soldiers; who are shooting down an equally definite section of the soldiers; who are shooting down an equally definite section of troops in the army. These butchers are the real power. Tseretelli and Chernov are ministers without power, puppet ministers, leaders of parties that support the butchers. That is a fact. And the fact is not altered even though Tseretelli or Chernov personally, no doubt, "do not approve" of the butchery, and even though their papers timidly dissociate themselves from it. Such changes of political garb change nothing in substance.

The organ of 150,000 Petrograd workers¹ has been suppressed;

¹ *i.e.*, *Pravda*, the central organ of the Bolsheviks.—*Ed.*

the military cadets on July 19 (6) killed the worker Voinov for carrying *Listok Pravdy* from the printshop. Is this not butchery? Is this not the work of Cavaignacs? But in this neither the government nor the Soviets are "guilty," we shall be told.

So much the worse for the government and the Soviets, we reply; for that means that they are ciphers, puppets, and that the real power is not in their hands.

First of all, and above all, the people must know the *truth*—they must know in whose hands the state power really lies. The people must be told the whole truth, namely, that the power is in the hands of a military clique of Cavaignacs (Kerensky, certain generals, officers, etc.) who are supported by the bourgeoisie as a class, headed by the Constitutional-Democratic Party and by all the monarchists, acting through the Black Hundred papers, *Novoye Vremya*, *Zhivoye Slovo*, etc., etc.

That power must be overthrown. Unless that is done all talk of fighting counter-revolution is but empty phrases, "self-deception and deception of the people."

That power now has the support both of the ministers, Tsere-telli and Chernov, and of their parties. We must explain to the people the butcher's role they are playing and the fact that such a *finale* for these parties was inevitable after their "errors" of May 4 (April 21), May 18 (5), June 22 (9) and July 17 (4) and after their approval of the policy of an offensive at the front, a policy which predetermined nine-tenths of the victory of the Cavaignacs in July.

Agitational work among the people must be reshaped to deal with the concrete experience of the present revolution, and particularly of the July days, *i.e.*, it must clearly point to the real enemy of the people, the military clique, the Constitutional-Democrats and the Black Hundreds, and must definitely unmask the petty-bourgeois parties, the Socialist-Revolutionary and the Menshevik parties, which played and are playing the part of butcher's assistants.

Agitational work among the people must be reshaped in order to make it clear that it is absolutely hopeless to expect that the peasants will obtain land as long as the power of the military

clique has not been overthrown, as long as the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties have not been exposed and made to forfeit the people's confidence. That would be a very long and arduous process under "normal" conditions of capitalist development. But the war and economic ruin will tremendously accelerate the process. These are "accelerators" that may make a month or even a week equal to a year.

Two objections may probably be made to what has been said above: first, that to speak now of a decisive struggle is to encourage sporadic action, which would only be to the advantage of the counter-revolution; secondly, that the overthrow of the latter would still mean the transfer of power to the Soviets.

To the first argument we reply: The workers of Russia are already class conscious enough not to yield to provocation at a moment which is clearly unfavourable to them. Nobody can deny that to take action and to offer resistance at the present moment would be abetting counter-revolution. Neither can it be denied that a decisive struggle will be possible only in the event of a new revolutionary upsurge among the very depths of the masses. But it is not enough to speak in general of a revolutionary upsurge, of the rising tide of revolution, of aid by the West European workers, and so forth; we must draw a definite conclusion from our past, from the lessons we have learnt. And that will lead us precisely to the slogan of a decisive struggle against the counter-revolution, which has usurped power.

The second argument also reduces itself to a substitution for concrete truths of arguments of too general a character. No one, no force, except the revolutionary proletariat, can overthrow the bourgeois counter-revolution. Now, after the experience of July 1917, it is the revolutionary proletariat that must take over state power independently. Without that the victory of the revolution is impossible. Power in the hands of the proletariat supported by the poor peasantry or semi-proletarians—that is the only solution. And we have already indicated the factors that can enormously accelerate this solution.

Soviets may, indeed are bound to, appear in this new revolution, but *not* the present Soviets, not organs of compromise with

the bourgeoisie, but organs of a revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie. It is true that we shall even then be in favour of building the whole state on the Soviet model. It is not a question of Soviets in general; it is a question of combating the *present* counter-revolution, of combating the treachery of the *present* Soviets.

The substitution of the abstract for the concrete is one of the greatest and most dangerous sins in a revolution. The present Soviets have failed, they have suffered utter collapse because they were dominated by the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties. At this moment the Soviets resemble sheep brought to the slaughter, bleating pitifully under the knife. The Soviets *at present* are impotent and helpless against triumphant and triumphing counter-revolution. The slogan of transferring power to the Soviets might be construed as a "simple" appeal for the transfer of power to the present Soviets, and to say that, to appeal for that now, would be to deceive the people. Nothing is more dangerous than deceit.

The cycle of development of the class and party struggle in Russia from March 12 (February 27) to July 17 (4) is complete. A new cycle is beginning, one that involves not the old classes, not the old parties, not the old Soviets, but classes, parties and Soviets that have been rejuvenated in the fire of struggle, tempered, schooled and re-created in the process of struggle. We must look forward, not backward. We must operate not with the old, but with the new, post-July, class and party categories. We must, at the beginning of the new cycle, proceed from the triumphant bourgeois counter-revolution, which triumphed because the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks compromised with it, and which can be vanquished only by the revolutionary proletariat. Of course, in this new cycle there will be many and various stages • including the final victory of the counter-revolution, the final defeat (without a struggle) of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks and a new upsurge of a new revolution. But of this it will be possible to speak only later, as each of these stages makes its appearance. . . .

July 1917

CONSTITUTIONAL ILLUSIONS

CONSTITUTIONAL illusions is the term for a political error which consists in the fact that people believe in the existence of a normal, juridical, regulated, and legalised, in brief, "constitutional," system, which in fact does not exist at all. It would seem at first glance that in present-day Russia, in this month of July 1917, when a constitution has not even been drafted, such constitutional illusions are impossible. But that is a profound mistake. In fact, the essential characteristic of the present political situation in Russia is that extremely large numbers of the population are under the sway of constitutional illusions. Unless this is understood, it is impossible to understand anything of the present political situation in Russia. Not even an approach to a correct conception of the tactical tasks in present-day Russia is possible unless prime attention is devoted to a systematic and merciless exposure of constitutional illusions, to laying bare their roots, and to re-establishing a proper political perspective.

Let us take three opinions characteristic of the constitutional illusions of the present day and examine them carefully.

The first of these opinions is that our country is on the eve of the convocation of a Constituent Assembly, and that, therefore, everything that is now going on is of a temporary, transitory, non-essential, non-decisive character, and that everything will soon be revised and definitely regulated by the Constituent Assembly. The second opinion is that certain parties—e.g., the Socialist-Revolutionaries or the Mensheviks, or an alliance of both—possess an obvious and undisputed majority among the people, or in "highly influential" institutions, such as the Soviets, and that therefore the will of these parties and of these institutions, as the

will of the majority of the people in general, cannot be ignored, and still less violated, in republican, democratic and revolutionary Russia. The third opinion is that a certain measure, for instance, the suppression of *Pravda*, was not legally sanctioned either by the Provisional Government or by the Soviets, and that, therefore, it is but an episode, a chance occurrence, which must in no case be regarded as possessing decisive significance.

Let us examine each of these opinions.

I

The convocation of a Constituent Assembly was promised by the first Provisional Government. That government considered that its main task was to lead the country to a Constituent Assembly. The second Provisional Government appointed October 13 (September 30) as the day for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. The third Provisional Government, after the events of July 17 (4), solemnly confirmed this date.

Nevertheless, the chances are ninety-nine out of a hundred that the Constituent Assembly will not be convened on that date. If it does meet on that date, the chances are again ninety-nine out of a hundred that it will be as impotent and useless as was the First Duma, so long as a second revolution does not succeed in Russia. To become convinced of this, one has only to abstract oneself for a minute from the hubbub of phrases, promises and petty doings of the day, which clog the brain, and cast a glance at that which is fundamental, that which determines everything in public life—the class struggle.

It is clear that the bourgeoisie in Russia has become closely amalgamated with the landlords. This is shown by the press, the elections, the policy of the Cadet Party and of the parties still further to the Right, and by the utterances made at the various “congresses” of “interested” persons.

The bourgeoisie understands perfectly well what the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionary and “Left” Menshevik chatter-boxes cannot understand, namely, that it is *impossible* to abolish private property in land in Russia, and without compensation at that, except by a gigantic economic revolution, by placing the

banks under the control of the entire people, by nationalising the trusts and by adopting a series of the most ruthless revolutionary measures against capital. The bourgeoisie understands that perfectly well. But at the same time it cannot help knowing, seeing and feeling that the vast majority of the peasants in Russia will now not only express themselves in favour of confiscating the landed estates, but will even prove to be much more Left than Chernov. For the bourgeoisie knows better than we do how many partial concessions have been made by Chernov, let us say, from May 19 (6) to June 15 (2), in the matter of delaying and narrowing down the various demands of the peasants, and how much effort was expended by the *Right* Socialist-Revolutionaries (Chernov, you know, is regarded as the "Centre" by the Socialist-Revolutionaries) at the Peasant Congress and on the Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies in order to "soothe" the peasants and to feed them with promises.

The bourgeoisie differs from the petty bourgeoisie in that it has learned from its economic and political experience the conditions under which "order" (i.e., the enslavement of the masses) can be preserved under the capitalist system. The bourgeois are businessmen, conversant with large-scale commercial transactions, and are accustomed to approach even political questions in a strictly business-like manner; they have no confidence in words and know how to take the bull by the horns.

The Constituent Assembly in Russia today will yield a majority to peasants who are more Left than the Socialist-Revolutionaries. The bourgeoisie knows this, and, knowing it, it naturally resists in the most energetic manner an early convocation of the Constituent Assembly. With the *existence* of a Constituent Assembly it will be impossible, or extremely difficult, to wage the imperialist war in the spirit of the secret treaties concluded by Nicholas II, or to defend the landed estates or the payment of compensation for them. The war will not wait. The class struggle will not wait. This was obviously shown even in the brief span from March 13 (February 28) to May 4 (April 21).

From the very beginning of the revolution there have been two views regarding the Constituent Assembly. The Socialist-Revolu-

tionaries and the Mensheviks, completely swayed by constitutional illusions, viewed the matter with the naive confidence of the petty bourgeois who refuses to know anything about the class struggle: The Constituent Assembly has been proclaimed, the Constituent Assembly will be—and that's all there is to it! All else is of the devil. The Bolsheviks, on the contrary, said: Only the growing strength and authority of the Soviets can guarantee the convocation of the Constituent Assembly and its success. The Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries laid emphasis on the legal act: the proclamation, the promise, the declaration of the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. The Bolsheviks laid emphasis on the class struggle: if the Soviets win, the Constituent Assembly is assured; if not, it is not assured.

And that is exactly what happened. The bourgeoisie have been waging, at times covertly and at times overtly, an incessant and relentless struggle against the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. This struggle was expressed in a desire to delay its convocation until the end of the war. It was expressed in repeated postponements of the date of convocation of the Constituent Assembly. When at last, after July 1 (June 18), more than a month after the formation of the Coalition Cabinet, the date for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly was appointed, a Moscow bourgeois paper declared that this was done under the pressure of Bolshevik agitation. *Pravda* has published an exact quotation from this paper.

After July 17 (4), when the servility and the timidity of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks led to the "victory" of the counter-revolution, a brief but highly significant phrase slipped into *Rech* respecting the "speediest possible" convocation of the Constituent Assembly! But on July 29 (16), an item appeared in *Volya Naroda* and in *Russkaya Volya* to the effect that the Cadets were demanding the postponement of the convocation of the Constituent Assembly under the pretext that it was "impossible" to summon it at such "short" notice, and that, the item states, the Menshevik Tseretelli, doing lackey service to the counter-revolution, had given his consent to its postponement until December 3 (November 20)!

Undoubtedly, this item slipped in despite the wish of the bourgeoisie. Such "revelations" are not to their advantage. But murder will out. The counter-revolution, becoming brazen after July 17 (4), blurted out the truth. The first seizure of power by the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie after July 17 (4) is immediately accompanied by a measure (a very serious measure) directed *against* the convocation of the Constituent Assembly.

That is a fact. And that fact reveals the utter futility of constitutional illusions. Unless a new revolution takes place in Russia, unless the power of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie (and particularly of the Cadets) is overthrown, unless the people withdraw their confidence from the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, parties of compromise with the bourgeoisie, the Constituent Assembly will either never be convoked, or else will be a "Frankfort talkshop," an impotent and useless assembly of petty bourgeois, frightened to death by the war and by the prospect of a "boycott of the government" by the bourgeoisie, and helplessly torn between convulsive efforts to rule without the bourgeoisie and the fear of having to get along without the bourgeoisie.

The question of the Constituent Assembly is *subordinate* to the question of the course and issue of the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Some time ago, we recall, *Rabochaya Gazeta* blurted out the remark that the Constituent Assembly would be a *Convention*. This is an example of the empty, wretched and contemptible bragging of our Menshevik lackeys of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. In order not to be a "Frankfort talkshop" or a First Duma, in order to be a *Convention*, one must have the courage, the capacity and the strength to aim ruthless blows at the counter-revolution, and not compromise with it. For this purpose the power must be in the hands of the most advanced, most resolute and most revolutionary class of the present epoch. For this purpose that class must be supported by the whole mass of the urban and rural poor (the semi-proletarians). This requires that the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie particularly, *i.e.*, particularly the Cadets and the higher com-

mand of the army shall be dealt with mercilessly. Such are the real, the class, the material conditions necessary for a Convention. It is enough to enumerate these conditions precisely and clearly in order to realise how ridiculous is the bragging of *Rabochaya Gazeta* and how incredibly foolish are the constitutional illusions of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks regarding a Constituent Assembly in present-day Russia.

II

Marx, when he castigated the petty-bourgeois "Social-Democrats" of 1848, was particularly severe in his condemnation of their unbridled use of phrases regarding "the people" and the majority of the people in general. It is well to recall this when examining the second opinion, when analysing the constitutional illusions on the subject of a "majority."

Certain definite and concrete conditions are required to make it really possible for the majority in the state to decide. It requires, first, the establishment of a state system, of a form of state power, which would permit the possibility of deciding matters by a majority, and which would guarantee this possibility actually being realised. Secondly, it requires that this majority, by its class composition, by the interrelation of classes inside (and outside) this majority, should be *able* to draw the chariot of state harmoniously and effectively. Every Marxist knows that these two concrete conditions are of decisive importance in the question of a majority of the people and of the direction of state affairs in accordance with the will of the majority. Nevertheless, the political literature of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, and still more their political conduct, betrays a complete lack of understanding of these conditions.

If the political power in the state is in the hands of a class the interests of which coincide with the interests of the majority, the administration of that state in accordance with the will of the majority will be possible.

If, however, the political power is in the hands of a class the interests of which differ from the interests of the majority, any form of majority rule is bound to lead to the duping or suppression

of the majority. Every bourgeois republic provides hundreds and thousands of examples of this kind. In Russia the bourgeoisie rules both economically and politically. Its interests, particularly during the imperialist war, are in violent conflict with the interests of the majority. Hence, from a materialist and Marxist, and not from a formal and juridical standpoint, the whole point is to expose this conflict, and to endeavour to prevent the masses from being duped by the bourgeoisie.

Our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, on the contrary, have fully shown and proved that their true role is to be an instrument of the bourgeoisie for deceiving the masses (the "majority"), to be the medium and the abettors of that deception. No matter how sincere individual Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks may be, their fundamental political ideas—that it is possible to escape from the imperialist war and to achieve a "peace without annexations and indemnities" without a dictatorship of the proletariat and the triumph of socialism, and that it is possible to secure the transfer of the land to the people without compensation and to establish "control" over production in the interests of the people without the same condition—these fundamental political (and, of course, economic) ideas of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks are in practice nothing but petty-bourgeois self-deception, or, which is the same thing, deception practised by the bourgeoisie on the masses (the "majority").

That is our first and main "amendment" to the question of the majority as understood by the petty-bourgeois democrats, Socialists of the Louis Blanc type, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. What, in practice, is the value of a "majority," if a majority is in itself but a formal factor, while materially, in actual reality, that majority is a majority of the parties with the help of which the bourgeoisie deceives the majority?

And, of course—and this leads us to our second "amendment," to the second of the above-mentioned fundamental conditions—this deception can be correctly understood only by ascertaining its class roots and its class meaning. This is not personal deception, not (to put it bluntly) a "swindle," but rather an illusory idea arising out of the economic situation in which a class finds

itself. The petty bourgeois is in such an economic situation, the conditions of his life are such, that he cannot help deceiving himself, he involuntarily and inevitably gravitates now towards the bourgeoisie, now towards the proletariat. It is *economically impossible* for him to pursue an independent "line."

His past draws him towards the bourgeoisie, his future towards the proletariat. His judgment gravitates towards the latter, his prejudice (to use an expression of Marx's) towards the former. In order that the majority of the people may become an actual majority in the administration of the state, and thereby the actual servant of the interests of the majority, the actual protector of its rights, and so forth, a definite class condition is required, *viz.*, that the majority of the petty bourgeoisie, at least at the decisive moment and in the decisive place, shall join forces with the revolutionary proletariat.

Without this, a majority is but a fiction which may prevail for some little time, may glitter and shine, make a noise, gather laurels, but which is absolutely and inevitably doomed to failure. Such, be it noted in passing, was the failure of the majority of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, as revealed in the Russian revolution in July 1917.

Furthermore, a revolution differs from the "normal situation" in a state precisely by the fact that controversial questions of state life are decided by the direct struggle of classes and the struggle of masses, even to the point of armed struggle. It cannot be otherwise when the masses are free and armed. It follows from this fundamental fact that in times of revolution it is not sufficient to ascertain the "will of the majority"; nay, *one must prove to be the stronger* at the decisive moment and in the decisive place; *one must be victorious*. Beginning with the Peasant War in the Middle Ages in Germany, and throughout all the big revolutionary movements and epochs, including 1848 and 1871, and including 1905, we see innumerable examples of how the better organised, more class conscious, and better armed minority forces its will upon the majority and vanquishes it.

Frederick Engels particularly emphasised the lesson to be drawn from the experience which to some degree is common to

the Peasant Revolt of the sixteenth century and to the Revolution of 1848 in Germany, namely, disunity of action and lack of centralisation on the part of the oppressed masses owing to their petty-bourgeois status in life. And examining the matter from this angle too we arrive at the same conclusion, namely, that a simple majority of the petty-bourgeois masses decides nothing, and can decide nothing, for the disunited millions of rural petty proprietors can acquire organisation, political consciousness in action and centralisation of action (which is essential for victory) *only* when they are led either by the bourgeoisie or by the proletariat.

It is well known that in the long run the problems of social life are decided by the class struggle in its bitterest and acutest form, the form of civil war. And in this war, as in any other war—a fact also well known and in principle not disputed by anyone—it is economics that decide. It is highly characteristic and significant that the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, while not denying this “in principle” and while perfectly realising the capitalist character of present-day Russia, dare not soberly look the truth in the face. They are afraid to admit the truth that every capitalist country, including Russia, is fundamentally divided into three main forces: the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, and the proletariat. The first and third are spoken of by all and recognised by all. As to the second—which is indeed the *numerical majority*!—nobody cares soberly to admit its significance, economic, political, or military.

The truth is no flatterer. That is why the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks shrink from knowing their own selves.

III

When we started writing this article, the suppression of *Pravda* was but an “incident” and had not yet been ratified by the government. But now, after July 29 (16), the government has formally suppressed *Pravda*.

If one regards it historically, as a whole and in conjunction with the entire process of preparation for this measure and its

realisation, this suppression casts a remarkably clear light on the "nature of the constitution" in Russia and on the danger of constitutional illusions.

It is a known fact that the Cadet Party, headed by Milyukov and the paper *Rech*, have ever since April been demanding repressive measures against the Bolsheviks. This demand for repression, voiced in various forms, from "statesman-like" articles in *Rech* to Milyukov's repeated cries, "Arrest them" (Lenin and other Bolsheviks), has been one of the major components, if not the major component, of the political programme of the Cadets in the revolution.

Long before Alexinsky and Co., in June and July, invented and fabricated the vile and calumnious charge that the Bolsheviks were German spies and in receipt of German money; long before the equally calumnious charge—contradicted by generally known facts and published documents—of "armed insurrection" and "mutiny," long before all this, the Cadet Party had been systematically, steadily and relentlessly demanding repressive measures against the Bolsheviks. Since this demand has now been realised, what opinion must one have of the honesty or the intelligence of people who forget, or make believe they forget, the true class and party origin of this demand? How are we to characterise the attempt on the part of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks to pretend that they believe that the "occasion" furnished on July 17 (4) for the repressive measures against the Bolsheviks was an "incidental," an "isolated" case—how are we to characterise it, if not as a crude falsification or the most incredible political imbecility? There must after all be a limit to the distortion of indisputable historical truths!

It is sufficient to compare the movement of May 3-4 (April 20-21) with that of July 16-17 (3-4) to realise their similarity of character: they were marked by the same objective features: a spontaneous outburst of discontent, impatience and indignation on the part of the masses; provocative shots from the Right; killings on the Nevsky; calumnious outcries on the part of the bourgeoisie, and particularly the Cadets, to the effect that "It was the Leninists who fired the shots on the Nevsky"; the extreme bitter-

ness and aggravation of the struggle between the proletarian masses and the bourgeoisie; an utter loss of presence of mind on the part of the petty-bourgeois parties, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, and a tremendous range of vacillation in their policy and in their approach to the question of state power generally. And June 22-23 (9-10) and July 1 (June 18) present an identical class picture in another form.

The course of events is as clear as can be: the growing dissatisfaction, impatience and indignation of the masses; the increasing aggravation of the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, particularly for influence over the petty-bourgeois masses, and, in this connection, two very important historical events, which prepare the way for the dependence of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks on the counter-revolutionary Cadets. These events are, first, the formation on May 19 (6) of a coalition cabinet, in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks proved to be servitors of the bourgeoisie, by becoming increasingly entangled by deals and agreements with the latter, by showing it thousands of "complaisances" in delaying the most essential revolutionary measures; second, the offensive at the front. The offensive inevitably implied the renewal of the imperialist war, a vast increase in the influence, weight and authority of the imperialist bourgeoisie, a widespread dissemination of chauvinism among the masses, and, last but not least, a transfer of power, at first the military power and then the state power generally, to the counter-revolutionary higher command of the army.

Such is the course of the historical events which between May 3-4 (April 20-21) and July 16-17 (3-4) rendered class antagonisms deeper and keener, and which after July 17 (4) enabled the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie to accomplish that which already on May 3-4 (April 20-21) had become clearly outlined as its programme and tactics, its immediate aim and the "clean" means which were to lead to the achievement of that aim.

Nothing from a historical point of view can be more puerile, more pitiful theoretically and ridiculous practically, than the philistine whining (indulged in also, it should be said, by L. Martov) over July 17 (4) and the assertion that the Bolsheviks somehow

managed to inflict defeat upon themselves, that it was caused by their own "adventurism," and so on, and so forth. All this whining, all this moralising to the effect that one should not have participated (in an attempt to lend a "peaceful and organised" character to the entirely justified dissatisfaction and indignation of the masses!), is either sheer apostasy, when proceeding from Bolsheviks, or the usual expression of the usual state of fright and confusion of the petty bourgeois. As a matter of fact, the movement of July 16-17 (3-4) grew out of the movement of May 3-4 (April 20-21) as inevitably as summer follows spring. It was the unconditional duty of the proletarian party to remain with the masses and endeavour to lend as peaceful and organised a character as possible to their justified action, and not to stand aside and wash their hands like Pontius Pilate on the pedantic plea that the masses were not organised to the last man and that in their movement excesses are sometimes committed—as though no excesses had been committed on May 3-4 (April 20-21), as though there has ever in history been a serious movement of the masses in which excesses were not committed!

And the defeat of the Bolsheviks after July 17 (4) followed with historical inevitability from the whole preceding course of events; for on May 3-4 (April 20-21) the petty-bourgeois masses and their leaders, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, were not yet tied by the offensive on the war front and had not yet become entangled by their petty deals with the bourgeoisie in the "Coalition Cabinet," whereas by July 17 (4) they had become so tied and entangled that they could not but signify their readiness to co-operate (in repressions, calumnies and butcher's work) with the counter-revolutionary Cadets. On July 17 (4) the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks finally sank into the cesspool of counter-revolution, because they had been sliding towards it throughout May and June by their participation in the Coalition Cabinet and their approval of the policy of an offensive on the war front.

We may appear to have deviated from our subject, namely, the suppression of *Pravda*, in order to give a historical estimate of the events of July 17 (4). But it only appears so, for in reality the

one cannot be understood without the other. We have seen that, if one discerns the essence of the matter and the connection between events, the closing down of *Pravda*, the arrests and other forms of persecution of the Bolsheviks are but the realisation of the old programme of the counter-revolution and of the Cadets in particular.

It would now be highly instructive to examine who precisely it was that carried this programme into effect, and by what methods.

Let us consider the facts. On July 15-16 (2-3) the movement was growing; the masses were seething with indignation owing to the inactivity of the government, the high cost of living, economic disruption, and the offensive at the front. The Cadets withdrew, playing at resigning and presenting an ultimatum to the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, and leaving them, who were tied to power but had no power, to pay for the defeat and the indignation of the masses.

On July 15-16 (2-3) the Bolsheviks were trying to restrain the masses from action. This has been acknowledged *even* by an eyewitness from *Dyelo Naroda*, who recounted what took place in the Grenadier Regiment on July 15 (2). On the evening of July 16 (3), the movement broke its banks and the Bolsheviks drew up an appeal explaining that the movement must maintain a "peaceful and organised" character. On July 17 (4), provocative shots from the Right increased the number of victims of the firing on both sides. It must be pointed out that the promise of the Executive Committee to investigate the incidents, to issue bulletins twice a day, etc., etc., has remained an empty promise! The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks did nothing whatever, did not even publish a complete list of the dead on both sides!

On the night of July 17 (4) the Bolsheviks drew up an appeal, which was printed in *Pravda* that same night, calling for the cessation of the demonstration. But that same night there began, first, a movement of counter-revolutionary troops into Petrograd (apparently upon the summons or with the consent of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, of their Soviets—a "delicate" point, regarding which, of course, strict silence is maintained even

now, when every atom of necessity for secrecy has disappeared!). Secondly, that very same night raids on the Bolsheviks were begun by military cadets and similar elements acting upon the instructions of the Commander of the Forces, Polovtsev, and of the general staff. On the night of July 17 (4), the *Pravda* office was raided. On July 18-19 (5-6), the printing plant of *Trud* was wrecked; a workingman by the name of Voinov was killed in broad daylight for carrying *Listok Pravdy* from the printing office; house searches and arrests were undertaken among the Bolsheviks and the revolutionary regiments were disarmed.

Who started all this? Not the government and not the Soviet, but the counter-revolutionary military gang centred around the general staff and acting in the name of the "intelligence service" and circulating the fabrication of Pereverzev and Alexinsky in order to "arouse the ire" of the army, and so forth.

The government is absent; the Soviets are absent; they are trembling for their own fate: they receive message after message to the effect that the Cossacks may come and smash them. The Black Hundred and Cadet press, which led the hounding of the Bolsheviks, is beginning to hound the Soviets. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks have fettered themselves hand and foot by their own policy. It was as fettered people that they called (or tolerated the calling of) counter-revolutionary troops to Petrograd. And that fettered them still more. They have sunk to the bottom of the hideous counter-revolutionary cesspool. They have cravenly dismissed their own commission, appointed to investigate the "case" of the Bolsheviks. They basely surrendered the Bolsheviks to the counter-revolutionaries. They abjectly participated in the demonstration on the occasion of the funeral of the Cossacks, and thus kissed the hand of the counter-revolutionaries.

They are fettered; they are at the bottom of the pit.

They toss uneasily; they present the government to Kerensky, then they go to Canossa to the Cadets, then they organise a "Zemsky Sobor"¹ or a "coronation" of the counter-revolutionary government in Moscow. Kerensky dismisses Polovtsev.

¹ National assembly.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

But nothing comes of all this uneasy tossing; the essence of the situation remains unchanged. Kerensky dismisses Polovtsev, but at the same time gives shape and legality to Polovtsev's measures and to his policy: he suppresses *Pravda*, he introduces capital punishment for the soldiers, he forbids the holding of meetings at the front, he continues to arrest Bolsheviks (even Kollontai!) in accordance with Alexinsky's programme.

The "essence of the constitution" in Russia is being revealed with striking clarity: the offensive at the front and the coalition with the Cadets in the rear have cast the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks into the cesspool of counter-revolution. *In reality*, the state power is passing into the hands of the counter-revolution, into the hands of the military gang. Kerensky and the government of Tseretelli and Chernov are *but a screen for it*; they are compelled to create *post factum* a legal foundation for its measures, actions and policies.

The haggling that is going on between the Cadets and Kerensky, Tseretelli and Chernov is of secondary significance, if not entirely insignificant. Whether in this haggling the Cadets win, or whether Tseretelli and Chernov hold out "alone," will in no wise affect the essence of the situation. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks have swung over to counter-revolution (forced by the policy they have been pursuing since May 19 [6])—and that is the fundamental, the main and decisive fact.

The cycle of party development is complete. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks sank steadily from their "confidence" in Kerensky on March 13 (February 28) to May 19 (6), which bound them to the counter-revolution, and then to July 18 (5), when they reached the very depths of counter-revolution.

A new phase is beginning. The victory of counter-revolution is causing disillusionment on the part of the masses with the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, and is opening the way for the adoption by the masses of a policy of supporting the revolutionary proletariat.

August 8 (July 26), 1917

LESSONS OF THE REVOLUTION

EVERY revolution involves a severe crisis in the lives of vast masses of the people. Unless the time is ripe for such a crisis, no real revolution can take place. And just as a crisis in the life of an individual teaches him a great deal and is fraught with mental suffering and emotional stress, so also a revolution teaches a whole people many a rich and valuable lesson in a very short space of time.

During a revolution millions and tens of millions of people learn in a week more than they do in a year of their ordinary somnolent life. For during a severe crisis in the life of a people it becomes particularly apparent what aims the various classes of the people are pursuing, what forces they control, and what methods they resort to in action.

It behoves every class conscious worker, every soldier and every peasant carefully to ponder the lessons of the Russian revolution, particularly now, at the end of July, when it has become obvious that the first stage of our revolution has ended in failure.

What indeed were the working class and peasant masses striving for when they made the revolution? What did they expect of the revolution? They expected, as we know, freedom, peace, bread and land.

But what do we see now?

Instead of freedom, the old despotic rule is beginning to be re-established. Capital punishment is being introduced for the soldiers at the front. Peasants are being prosecuted for arbitrary seizure of the landed estates. The printing plants of workers' newspapers are being smashed. Workers' newspapers are being suppressed without trial. Bolsheviks are being arrested, often without

charges being preferred or upon charges obviously based on calumny.

It may be argued that the prosecution of the Bolsheviks does not constitute a violation of freedom, for only definite individuals are being prosecuted and on definite charges. But such an argument would be a deliberate and obvious untruth; for what justification can there be for wrecking printing presses and suppressing newspapers on account of the crimes of individual persons, even if these charges are proved and established by court of law? It would be a different thing if the government had legally declared the whole Party of the Bolsheviks, their whole policy and views, to be criminal. But everybody knows that the government of a free Russia could not, and did not, do anything of the kind.

The main thing is that the newspapers of the landlords and capitalists furiously abused the Bolsheviks for their opposition to the war and for their hostility to the landlords and the capitalists, and demanded the open arrest and prosecution of the Bolsheviks, even at a time when not a single charge had been trumped up against a single Bolshevik. The people want peace. But the revolutionary government of free Russia has again started a war of conquest on the basis of the secret treaties which the former Tsar Nicholas II concluded with the British and French capitalists in order that the Russian capitalists might plunder other nations. These secret treaties have remained unpublished to this very day. The government of free Russia has resorted to subterfuges and refrained from proposing a just peace to all the nations.

There is no bread. Famine is again looming. Everybody can see that the capitalists and the rich are shamelessly cheating the treasury in the matter of military supplies (the war is now costing the people fifty million rubles daily), that they are raking in untold profits as a result of high prices, while nothing whatever is being done to establish a rigid control by the workers over the production and distribution of goods. The capitalists are becoming more brazen every day, throwing workers on to the streets at a time when the people are suffering from lack of commodities. A vast majority of the peasants at congress after congress have loudly and clearly proclaimed the ownership of land by the landlords

to be an injustice and a robbery. But a government which calls itself revolutionary and democratic has been leading the peasants by the nose for months and deceiving them by promises and delays. For months Minister Chernov was not allowed by the capitalists to issue laws prohibiting the sale and purchase of land. And when finally this law was passed, the capitalists started an infamous campaign of vilification against Chernov and are continuing this campaign to the present day.

The government has become so brazen in its defence of the landlords that it is beginning to bring peasants to trial for "arbitrary" seizure of land.

They are leading the peasants by the nose by persuading them to wait for the Constituent Assembly. But the convocation of the Assembly is being all the time postponed by the capitalists. Now that, owing to the pressure of the Bolsheviks, the date of its convocation has been set for October 13 (September 30), the capitalists are openly clamouring that this is "impossibly" short notice, and are demanding the postponement of the Constituent Assembly. . . . The most influential members of the party of capitalists and landlords, the "Cadet," or the "People's Freedom," Party, such as Panina, are openly advocating that the convocation of the Constituent Assembly be postponed until the end of the war.

As to the land, wait until the Constituent Assembly. As to the Constituent Assembly, wait until the end of the war. As to the end of the war, wait until we have won a complete victory. That is what it comes to. The capitalists and landlords, having a majority in the government, are simply mocking the peasants.

* * *

But how could this have happened, in a free country, after the overthrow of the tsarist power?

In a country that is not free, the people are ruled by a tsar and a handful of landlords, capitalists and bureaucrats, who are not elected by anybody.

In a free country, the people are ruled only by those who have been elected for that purpose by the people themselves. At the elections people are divided into parties, and as a rule each

class of the population forms its own party; for instance, the landlords, the capitalists, the peasants and the workers each form their own party. Hence, the people are ruled in free countries by means of an open struggle of parties and by free agreement arrived at by these parties among themselves.

For a period of about four months following the overthrow of the tsarist power on March 12 (February 27), 1917, Russia was ruled as a free country, *i.e.*, by means of an open struggle of freely formed parties and by free agreement among these parties. Hence, in order to understand the development of the Russian revolution, it is above all necessary to study what were the chief parties, what class interests they defended, and what were the chief interrelations between these parties.

* * *

After the overthrow of the tsarist government the state power passed into the hands of the first Provisional Government. It consisted of representatives of the bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, the capitalists, joined by the landlords. The party of the "Cadets," the chief party of the capitalists, occupied the foremost place as the ruling and government party of the bourgeoisie.

It was not by chance that this party secured power, although it was not the capitalists, of course, but the workers and peasants, the soldiers and sailors, who fought the tsarist troops and shed their blood for freedom. Power was secured by the party of the capitalists, because that class possessed the advantage of wealth, organisation, and knowledge. Since 1905, and particularly during the war, the class of capitalists and landlords associated with them in Russia made its greatest progress in the matter of its own organisation.

The Cadet Party had always been monarchist; it was so both in 1905 and from 1905 to 1917. After the victory of the people over the tsarist tyranny that party declared itself a republican party. The experience of history shows that when the people triumph over the monarchy capitalist parties always consent to become republican, in order the better to defend the privileges of the capitalists and their power over the people.

In word, the Cadet Party stands for "the freedom of the people." But in deed it stands for the capitalists, and it was immediately joined by the landlords, the monarchists, and the Black Hundreds. The press and the elections are proof of this. All the bourgeois papers and the whole Black Hundred press began to sing in unison with the Cadets after the revolution. Not daring to come out openly, all the monarchist parties supported the Cadet Party at the elections, as, for instance, in Petrograd.

Having obtained state power, the Cadets bent every effort to continue the predatory war of conquest begun by Tsar Nicholas II, who had concluded secret predatory treaties with the British and French capitalists. By these treaties the Russian capitalists were promised, in the event of victory, the seizure of Constantinople, Galicia, Armenia, etc. As to the people, the government of the Cadets put them off with idle subterfuges and promises, deferring all matters of vital and essential interest to the workers and peasants until the Constituent Assembly, the date of the convocation of which, however, it did not appoint.

The people, making use of their freedom, began to organise independently. The chief organisation of the workers and peasants, who form the overwhelming majority of the population of Russia, was the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies. These Soviets began to be formed as early as the February Revolution, and within a few weeks all class conscious and advanced members of the working class and the peasantry were united in Soviets in most of the large cities of Russia and in many rural districts.

The elections to the Soviets were carried on in complete freedom. The Soviets were genuine organisations of the masses of the people, the workers and peasants. The Soviets were genuine organisations of the vast majority of the people. The workers and the peasants, clad in military uniform, were armed.

It goes without saying that the Soviets could, and should, have taken the entire power of the state into their hands. Pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly there should have been no other power in the state than the Soviets. Only thus could our revolution have become a true people's revolution, a true demo-

cratic revolution. Only thus could the toiling masses, who are genuinely anxious for peace, and who have no interest in a war of conquest, have begun to carry out a decided and firm policy, which would have put an end to the war of conquest and would have led to peace. Only thus could the workers and peasants have bridled the capitalists, who are making vast profits "in the war" and have reduced the country to a state of ruin and starvation. But in the Soviets only a minority of the deputies were on the side of the party of the revolutionary workers, the Bolshevik Social-Democrats, who demanded that the whole state power should be transferred to the Soviets. The majority of the deputies in the Soviets were on the side of the parties of the Menshevik Social-Democrats and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, who were opposed to the transfer of power to the Soviets. Instead of removing the government of the bourgeoisie and replacing it by a government of the Soviets, these parties insisted on supporting the government of the bourgeoisie, arriving at an agreement with it, and forming a common government with it. This policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie pursued by the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, who enjoyed the confidence of the majority of the people, forms the main feature of the development of the revolution during the five months since its outbreak.

Let us first see how the compromise of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks with the bourgeoisie took place, and then let us seek an explanation of the fact that the majority of the people trusted them.

The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries compromised with the capitalists in one form or another at every period of the Russian revolution.

At the beginning of March (the end of February) 1917, as soon as the people had triumphed and the tsarist power had been overthrown, the capitalist Provisional Government accepted Kerensky as one of its members as a "Socialist." As a matter of fact, Kerensky had never been a Socialist; he had only been a Trudovik, and had joined the "Socialist-Revolutionaries" only in March 1917, when to do so had become both safe and profitable. Through Kerensky, who was vice-chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, the

capitalist Provisional Government immediately set about binding and taming the Soviet. The Soviet, *i.e.*, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks who predominated in it, allowed itself to be tamed and agreed immediately after the formation of the capitalist Provisional Government to "support it" "to the extent that" it carried out its promises.

The Soviet regarded itself as a body for supervising and controlling the actions of the Provisional Government. The leaders of the Soviet established what was known as a Contact Commission for maintaining relations with the government. Within this Contact Commission the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders of the Soviet conducted continuous negotiations with the capitalist government; they were in fact ministers without portfolios, unofficial ministers.

This state of affairs continued during the whole of March and almost the whole of April. The capitalists resorted to delays and subterfuges, endeavouring to gain time. Not a single step of any importance was taken by the capitalist government during this period in the direction of developing the revolution. It did absolutely nothing even in furtherance of its direct task, the convocation of the Constituent Assembly; it did not submit the question to the localities or even set up a Central Commission to handle the preparations. The government was concerned with only one thing, namely, with surreptitiously renewing the predatory international treaties concluded by the tsar with the capitalists of Great Britain and France, cautiously and unostentatiously thwarting the revolution and promising everything without fulfilling anything. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in the Contact Commission acted like fools and were fed on grandiloquent phrases, promises and hopes. Like the crow in the fable, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks succumbed to flattery and listened with great satisfaction to the assurances of the capitalists that they valued the Soviets highly and would not take a single step without them.

But time passed and the capitalist government did absolutely nothing for the revolution. On the contrary, it managed during this period, in detriment to the revolution, to renew the secret preda-

tory treaties, or rather to confirm them and "vitalise" them by supplementary and no less secret negotiations with the diplomats of British and French imperialism. It managed during this period, in detriment to the revolution, to lay the foundations of a counter-revolutionary organisation of (or at least of closer relations among) the generals and officers of the army on active service. In detriment to the revolution, it managed to start an organisation of industrialists, manufacturers and millowners, who, under the onslaught of the workers, were compelled to make concession after concession, but who at the same time began to sabotage production and to prepare at a favourable moment to bring it to a standstill.

However, the organisation of the advanced workers and peasants in the Soviets was steadily progressing. The best representatives of the oppressed classes felt that, notwithstanding the agreement between the government and the Petrograd Soviet, notwithstanding the oratory of Kerensky, notwithstanding the Contact Commission, the government was an enemy of the people, an enemy of the revolution. The masses felt that unless the resistance of the capitalists were broken, the cause of peace, the cause of freedom, the cause of the revolution would inevitably be lost. The impatience and bitterness of the masses grew.

The climax came on May 3-4 (April 20-21). The movement flared up spontaneously; nobody prepared it. The movement was so definitely directed against the government that one regiment rose in arms and appeared at the Mariinsky Palace to arrest the ministers. It became obvious to everybody that the government could not remain in power. The Soviets could (and should) have taken power without meeting the least resistance from any quarter. Instead, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks supported the collapsing capitalist government, entangled themselves in still further compromises and adopted measures that were still more fatal to the revolution.

The revolution is enlightening all classes with a rapidity and thoroughness unknown in normal, peaceful times. The capitalists, better organised, more experienced in the affairs of the class struggle and politics, learned its lessons faster than the others. Perceiving that the position of the government was untenable, they

resorted to a measure which for many decades now, ever since 1848, has been practised by the capitalists of other countries in order to fool, divide and weaken the workers. This measure is what is known as a "coalition" government, *i.e.*, a joint cabinet of members of the bourgeoisie and of renegades from socialism.

In countries where freedom and democracy have longest existed side by side with a revolutionary labour movement, namely, in Great Britain and France, the capitalists have frequently and successfully resorted to this method. When they enter a bourgeois cabinet the "Socialist" leaders inevitably prove to be pawns, puppets, screens for the capitalists, instruments for deceiving the workers. The "democratic and republican" capitalists of Russia resorted to this same method. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks let themselves be fooled at once, and the "Coalition" Cabinet, with the participation of Chernov, Tseretelli and Co., became a fact on May 19 (6).

The fools of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties were jubilant and bathed self-admiringly in the rays of the ministerial glory of their leaders. The capitalists gleefully rubbed their hands at having found coadjutors against the people in the shape of the "leaders of the Soviets" and at having secured the promise of the latter to support "offensive actions at the front," *i.e.*, a renewal of the imperialist predatory war which for a while had come to a standstill. The capitalists were well aware of the puffed-up impotence of these leaders, they knew that the promises of the bourgeoisie—regarding control over, or even the organisation of, production, regarding a policy of peace, and so forth—would never be fulfilled.

And that is exactly what happened. The second phase in the development of the revolution, May 19 (6) to June 22 (9) or July 1 (June 18), fully corroborated the expectations of the capitalists as to the ease with which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks could be duped.

While Plekhanov and Skobelev were fooling themselves and the people with grandiloquent speeches to the effect that one hundred per cent of the profits of the capitalists would be taken away from them, that their "resistance was broken," and so forth, the

capitalists were steadily fortifying themselves. Nothing, absolutely nothing, was undertaken during the whole of this period to curb the capitalists. The minister renegades from socialism were mere talking machines for distracting the attention of the oppressed classes, while the entire apparatus of state administration remained in the hands of the bureaucracy (the government officials) and the bourgeoisie. The notorious Palchinsky, Vice-Minister for Industry, was a typical representative of that apparatus, thwarting every measure aimed at the capitalists. The ministers talked and talked, but everything remained as of old.

The bourgeoisie used Minister Tseretelli particularly to fight the revolution. He was sent to "calm" Kronstadt when the local revolutionaries had the audacity to remove an appointed commissar. The bourgeoisie launched in its newspapers an incredibly vociferous, violent and vicious campaign of lies, calumnies and slander against Kronstadt, accusing it of desiring "defection from Russia," repeating this and similar absurdities in a thousand different modifications in order to terrify the petty bourgeoisie and the philistines. A most typical representative of the stupid and frightened philistines, Tseretelli, was more "conscientious" than the rest in swallowing the bait of bourgeois calumny; he was more zealous than the rest in "fulminating against and subduing" Kronstadt, without realising that he was playing the role of lackey of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. The result was that he was the instrument of the "compromise" arrived at with revolutionary Kronstadt, in accordance with which the commissar for Kronstadt is not simply appointed by the government, but is elected locally, and *confirmed* by the government. It was on such miserable compromises that the ministers who had fled from socialism to the bourgeoisie wasted their time.

Wherever it was impossible for a bourgeois minister to appear before the revolutionary workers or the Soviets in defence of the government, a "Socialist" minister—Skobelev, or Tseretelli, or Chernov—appeared (or, more correctly, was sent by the bourgeoisie) and faithfully performed the work of the bourgeoisie; he would do his level best to defend the cabinet, whitewash the

capitalists and fool the people by repeating the old, old promises, and by counselling them to wait, wait, wait.

Minister Chernov particularly was engaged in bargaining with his bourgeois colleagues; down to July, down to the new "government crisis" which began after the movement of July 16-17 (3-4), down to the time when the Cadets withdrew from the cabinet, Minister Chernov was continuously engaged in the useful and interesting work, so beneficial to the people, of persuading his bourgeois colleagues, counselling them to agree at least to the prohibition of the sale and purchase of land. Such a prohibition had been most solemnly promised to the peasants at the All-Russian, (Soviet) Congress of Peasants' Deputies in Petrograd. But the promise remained but a promise. Chernov proved unable to fulfil it either in May or in June, until the revolutionary tide, the spontaneous outbreak of July 16-17 (3-4), which coincided with the retirement of the Cadets from the cabinet, made it possible to enact this measure. But even so it was an isolated measure, incapable of causing any palpable improvement in the struggle of the peasantry against the landlords for the land.

Meanwhile, at the front the counter-revolutionary imperialist task of renewing the imperialist predatory war, a task which Guchkov, so hated by the people, had been unable to fulfil, was being fulfilled successfully and brilliantly by the "revolutionary democrat" Kerensky, that newly-baked member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. He was intoxicated with his own eloquence, incense was burned to him by the imperialists, who were using him as a pawn; he was flattered; he was worshipped. All this because he served the capitalists religiously, persuading the "revolutionary army" to agree to renew the war which was being fought in fulfilment of the treaties concluded by Tsar Nicholas II with the capitalists of Great Britain and France, a war fought in order that the Russian capitalists might secure Constantinople, Lemberg, Erzerum and Trebizond.

Thus passed the second phase of the Russian revolution—May 19 (6) to June 22 (9). The counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie strengthened and consolidated itself, and, shielded and defended by the "Socialist" ministers, prepared to launch an offensive both

against the external enemy and against the internal enemy, i.e., the revolutionary workers.

On June 22 (9), the party of the revolutionary workers, the Bolsheviks, were preparing for a demonstration in Petrograd with the purpose of giving organised expression to the steadily growing dissatisfaction and indignation of the masses. The Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders, entangled in compromises with the bourgeoisie and bound by the imperialist policy of an offensive at the front, were horrified, feeling that they were losing their influence among the masses. A general howl was raised against the demonstration, in which the counter-revolutionary Cadets united with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. Under their leadership, and as a result of their policy of compromise with the capitalists, the swing-over of the petty-bourgeois masses to an alliance with the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie became definite and obvious. Therein lies the historical significance and class meaning of the crisis of June 22 (9).

The Bolsheviks called off the demonstration, not desiring to lead the workers into desperate collision with the united Cadets, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. But the latter, in order to retain at least a remnant of the confidence of the masses, were compelled to call a general demonstration for July 1 (June 18). The bourgeoisie were beside themselves with rage, rightly discerning in this a certain vacillation of the petty-bourgeois democrats towards the proletariat; they decided to 'paralyse the action of the democracy by an advance at the front.

And indeed, July 1 (June 18) marked an imposing victory for the slogans of the revolutionary proletariat, the slogans of Bolshevism, among the Petrograd masses. And on July 2 (June 19) the bourgeoisie and the Bonapartist¹ Kerensky solemnly announced that the offensive at the front had begun on the very day of July 1 (June 18).

¹ Bonapartism (from the name of the two French emperors, Bonaparte)—an epithet applied to a government which, endeavouring to appear non-partisan when the struggle between the parties of the capitalists and the workers has grown particularly acute, actually utilises the situation for its own advantage. In reality serving the capitalists, such a government most of all dupes the workers by promises and petty doles.

The offensive at the front meant in fact a resumption of the predatory war in the interests of the capitalists against the will of the vast majority of the toilers. That is why the offensive at the front was inevitably accompanied, on the one hand by a gigantic growth of chauvinism and the transfer of the military power (and consequently of the state power) to the clique of military Bonapartists, and on the other by the adoption of repressive measures against the masses, the persecution of the internationalists, the abolition of the freedom of agitation and the arrest and shooting of those opposed to the war.

May 19 (6) bound the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to the triumphal chariot of the bourgeoisie with a rope: July 1 (June 18) shackled them, as servants of the capitalists, with a chain.

With the renewal of the predatory war, the bitterness of the masses naturally gained rapidly in intensity. July 16-17 (3-4) witnessed an outburst of indignation, which the Bolsheviks attempted to restrain, but which they were, of course, bound to endeavour to lend the most organised form possible.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, slaves of the bourgeoisie and enchained by their master, agreed to everything: they agreed to the drafting of reactionary troops into Petrograd, to the restoration of capital punishment, to disarming the workers and the revolutionary troops, to arrests, prosecutions and the suppression of newspapers without trial. The power which the bourgeoisie in the government were unable to secure entirely, and which the Soviets did not wish to secure, fell into the hands of the military clique, the Bonapartists, who of course were wholly supported by the Cadets and the Black Hundreds, by the landlords and capitalists.

And so from step to step. Having set foot on the inclined plane of compromise with the bourgeoisie, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks slid headlong to the bottom. On March 13 (February 28), in the Petrograd Soviet, they promised conditional support to the bourgeois government. On May 19 (6) they saved it from collapse and allowed themselves to be made its servants and defenders by agreeing to an offensive at the front. On June 22 (9)

they united with the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie in a campaign of furious rage, lies and calumnies against the revolutionary proletariat. On July 2 (June 19) they approved the resumption of the predatory war, which had already begun. On July 16 (3) they consented to the summoning of reactionary troops, and this was the beginning of their final surrender of power to the Bonapartists. Down and down, from step to step.

This shameful *finale* of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties is not fortuitous: it is a consequence of the economic situation of the small masters, the petty bourgeoisie, as has been repeatedly borne out by the experience of Europe.

Everybody, of course, has observed how the small master bends every effort and strains every nerve to get on in the world, to become a real master, to rise to the position of an "established" employer, a real bourgeois. As long as capitalism rules, there is no other alternative for the small master except himself to become a capitalist (and that is possible at best for one in every hundred small masters), or to become a ruined man, a semi-proletarian, and ultimately a proletarian. The same is true in politics: the petty-bourgeois democrats, especially their leaders, tend to follow the bourgeoisie. The leaders of the petty-bourgeois democracy console their masses with promises and assurances as to the possibility of reaching agreement with the big capitalists; at best, they obtain from the capitalists for a very short time certain small concessions for a small upper stratum of the toiling masses; but in every decisive question, in every important matter, the petty-bourgeois democracy are always to be found in the wake of the bourgeoisie, as a feeble appendage of the bourgeoisie, an obedient tool in the hands of the financial kings. The experience of Great Britain and France has proved this over and over again.

The experience of the Russian revolution from February to July 1917, when events developed with unusual rapidity, particularly under the influence of the imperialist war and the profound crisis arising therefrom—that experience has most strikingly and palpably confirmed the old Marxist truth concerning the instability of the position of the petty bourgeoisie.

The lesson of the Russian revolution is that there is no escape

for the masses from the iron grip of war, famine and enslavement to the landlords and capitalists, unless they completely break with the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, unless they clearly recognise the treacherous role of the latter, unless they renounce all compromise with the bourgeoisie and decidedly come over to the side of the revolutionary workers. Only the revolutionary workers, supported by the poor peasants, can smash the resistance of the capitalists and lead the people to the conquest of the land without compensation, to complete freedom, to salvation from famine, the cessation of the war, and to a just and lasting peace.

September 12-13 (August 30-31), 1917

POSTSCRIPT

This article, as is apparent from the text, was written at the beginning of August (the end of July).

The history of the revolution during the month of August has fully corroborated what was said in this article. Then, at the end of August, the Kornilov revolt created a new turn in the revolution, by clearly showing the people that the Cadets, in alliance with the counter-revolutionary generals, are striving to disperse the Soviets and to restore the monarchy. How strong this new turn of the revolution is, and whether it will succeed in putting an end to the ruinous policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie, the near future will show.

September 19 (6), 1917

TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIAL- DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY

It is possible that these lines will arrive too late, for events are developing with an at times dizzying rapidity. I am writing this on Wednesday, September 12 (August 30), and the recipients will read it not earlier than Friday, September 15 (2). Nevertheless, I take the chance and consider it my duty to write the following.

The Kornilov revolt was extremely unexpected (unexpected at such a time and in such a form); it was, one might say, an incredibly abrupt turn in the course of events.

Like every abrupt turn in events, it calls for a revision and alteration of tactics. And, as in the case of every revision, one must be super-cautious in order not to lose sight of principles.

It is my conviction that those who are drifting (like Volodarsky) into defencism or (like other Bolsheviks) into a *bloc* with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and into *supporting* the Provisional Government are guilty of lack of principle. It is absolutely wrong and unprincipled. We shall become defencists *only after* the power has passed to the proletariat, *after* peace has been proposed and *after* the secret treaties and ties with the banks have been broken; *only after all this*. Neither the fall of Riga nor the fall of Petrograd will make us defencists (I particularly beg that this be given to Volodarsky to read). Until then, we are for a proletarian revolution, we are opposed to the war, we are *not* defencists.

And *even now* we must not support Kerensky's government. That would be unprincipled. It will be asked: What, not even fight Kornilov? Of course, fight him! But that is not the same thing; there is a dividing line; that line is being overstepped by certain Bolsheviks, who allow themselves to become "compromisers" and to be *carried away* by the flood of events.

We will fight and are fighting Kornilov, just as Kerensky's

troops are. But we do not support Kerensky; *on the contrary*, we expose his weakness. That is the difference. It is a rather subtle difference, but an extremely important one, and must not be forgotten.

What change, then, is necessitated in our tactics by the Kornilov revolt?

We must change the *form* of our struggle against Kerensky. While not relaxing our hostility towards him one iota, while not withdrawing a single word we uttered against him, while not renouncing the aim of overthrowing Kerensky, we say: We must *reckon* with the present state of affairs; we shall not overthrow Kerensky just now; we shall adopt a *different* method of fighting him, namely, we shall point out to the people (who are fighting Kornilov) the *weakness and vacillation* of Kerensky. That was done *before* too. But now it has become *the main thing*. That is the change.

The change, furthermore, consists in this, that *the main thing* now is to intensify our agitation in favour of what might be called "partial demands" to be addressed to Kerensky, namely: arrest Milyukov; arm the Petrograd workers; summon the Kronstadt, Viborg and Helsingfors troops to Petrograd; disperse the State Duma; arrest Rodzyanko; legalise the transfer of the landlords' estates to the peasants; introduce workers' control over bread and over the factories, etc., etc. These demands must be addressed not only to Kerensky, and *not so much* to Kerensky as to the workers, soldiers and peasants who have been *carried away* by the struggle against Kornilov. Draw them still further; encourage them to beat up the generals and officers who are in favour of supporting Kornilov; urge *them* to demand the immediate transfer of the land to the peasants; suggest *to them* the necessity of arresting Rodzyanko and Milyukov, of dispersing the State Duma, of shutting down *Rech* and the other bourgeois papers, and of instituting proceedings against them. The "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries particularly must be pushed in this direction.

It would be wrong to think that we have departed from the task of the conquest of power by the proletariat. Not at all. We have approached much nearer to it; only *not directly* but oblique-

ly. And *at this very minute* we must conduct our agitation against Kerensky not so much directly as indirectly, that is, by demanding a most active energetic and truly revolutionary war against Kornilov. The development of that war alone may put *us* in power, but of this we must *speak* as little as possible in our agitation (all the time remembering that events may any day put the power into our hands, and then we shall not relinquish it). It seems to me that this should be transmitted in the form of a letter to agitators (not through the press), to our agitators and propagandists, and to the members of the Party generally. As to the talk of defence of the country, of a united front of revolutionary democracy, of supporting the Provisional Government, and so forth, we must oppose it ruthlessly as being mere *talk*. This is the time for *action*. We must tell them: You, Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik gentlemen, have long ago worn these phrases to shreds. This is the time for *action*; the war against Kornilov must be conducted as a revolutionary war; the masses must be drawn into it, they must be aroused, inflamed (Kerensky is *afraid* of the masses, he is *afraid* of the people). In the war against the Germans *action* is now required; an *immediate and unequivocal peace must be proposed on precisely formulated terms*. If we do that, we may secure either a speedy peace or the transformation of the war into a revolutionary war. Otherwise all the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries will remain lackeys of imperialism.

* * *

P.S. I have seen six issues of *Rabochy* since this was written, and I must say that there is complete harmony in our views. I greet with all my heart the splendid editorials, the press reviews and the articles by V. M—n and Vol—y. As to Volodarsky's speech, I have read his letter to the editors, and it also "liquidates" the reproaches I brought against him. Once more, hearty greetings and best wishes.

September 12 (August 30), 1917

COMPROMISES

THE term compromise in politics implies the surrender of certain of one's demands, the renunciation of part of one's demands by agreement with another party.

The usual idea of the man in the street regarding the Bolsheviks, an idea fostered by the systematic calumniations of the press, is that the Bolsheviks are opposed to all compromises, no matter with whom and under what circumstances.

That idea is flattering to us as the party of the revolutionary proletariat, for it shows that even our enemies are obliged to admit our loyalty to the fundamental principles of socialism and the revolution. Nevertheless, the truth must be told: this idea does not correspond to the facts. Engels was right when, in his criticism of the manifesto of the Blanquist Communists (1873), he ridiculed their declaration, "No compromise!" That is a mere phrase, he said, for compromises are often unavoidably forced upon a fighting party by circumstances, and it is absurd once and for all to refuse "to stop at intermediate stations." The task of a truly revolutionary party is not to renounce compromises once and for all, but to be able *throughout all compromises*, when they are unavoidable, to remain true to its principles, to its class, to its revolutionary purpose, to its task of preparing the way for the revolution and of educating the masses for victory in the revolution.

For instance, participation in the Third and Fourth Dumas was a compromise, a temporary renunciation of revolutionary demands. But that was an absolutely unavoidable compromise, for the existing relation of forces made it impossible for us for the time being to conduct a mass revolutionary struggle. and in order to be able to make prolonged preparations for it one had to be able to work even *from within* such a "pigsty." That the attitude

of the Bolsheviks as a party towards this question was absolutely correct has been proved by history.

At the present moment the question is one not of an enforced, but of a voluntary compromise.

Our Party, like every other political party, is striving to secure political domination *for itself*. Our aim is the dictatorship of the revolutionary proletariat. Six months of revolution have proved vividly, forcibly and convincingly that this demand is correct and inevitable in the interests of *this* revolution, for otherwise the people will never obtain a democratic peace, or land for the peasantry, or complete freedom (*i.e.*, a fully democratic republic). This has been manifested and proved by the course of events during the half-year of our revolution, by the struggle of the classes and parties and by the development of the crises of May 3-4 (April 20-21), June 22-23 (9-10), July 1-2 (June 18-19), July 16-18 (3-5) and September 9-13 (August 27-31).

The Russian revolution is experiencing so abrupt and original a turn of events that we, as a party, may propose a voluntary compromise—true, not to the bourgeoisie, our direct and main class enemy, but to our nearest adversaries, the “ruling” petty-bourgeois democratic parties, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks.

We may propose a compromise to these parties only by way of exception, only because a specific situation exists, which obviously will last only a very short time; and it seems to me we should do so.

The compromise, on our part, would consist of a return to the pre-July demand: All power to the Soviets and a government of Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks responsible to the Soviets.

At this moment, and only at this moment, perhaps *only for a few days*, or for a week or two, such a government might be set up and consolidated in a perfectly peaceful way. It is extremely probable that it would guarantee the peaceful advance of the whole Russian revolution, and provide unusually good chances for greater strides towards peace and the victory of socialism on the part of the world movement.

For the sake, and only for the sake, of such a peaceful development of the revolution—a possibility *extremely* rare in history and *extremely* valuable, a possibility that comes only in exceptionally rare cases—the Bolsheviks, partisans of world revolution and of revolutionary methods, may, and should, in my opinion, consent to such a compromise.

The compromise would amount to this: that the Bolsheviks, without making any claim to participate in the government (which is impossible for the internationalists until a dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasantry is actually realised), would refrain from demanding the immediate transfer of power to the proletariat and the poor peasants and from employing revolutionary methods of fighting for this demand. A condition, one that is self-evident and not new to the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, would be complete freedom of propaganda and the convocation of the Constituent Assembly without further procrastination, or even at an earlier date than that appointed.

The Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, as the governmental *bloc*, would agree (assuming that the compromise is reached) to form a government responsible solely and exclusively to the Soviets, and also to the transfer of the entire power to the Soviets in the localities. This would constitute the “new” condition. No other condition would, I think, be advanced by the Bolsheviks, confident that, with full freedom of propaganda and with the immediate realisation of a new democracy in the composition of the Soviets (new elections) and in their functioning, the peaceful progress of the revolution and a *peaceful solution* of the party strife within the Soviets would be guaranteed.

Perhaps this is *already* impossible? Perhaps. But if there is even one chance in a hundred, the attempt to achieve such a possibility would still be worth while.

What would be gained from this “compromise” by each of the “contracting” parties, *i.e.*, by the Bolsheviks, on the one hand, and by the *bloc* of Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, on the other? If *neither side* gains anything, then the compromise must be recognised as impossible, and nothing more is to be said. However difficult that compromise may be at present (after July and

August, two months equivalent to two decades in "peaceful," somnolent times), it seems to me there is a small chance of its being realised. This chance has been created by the decision of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks not to participate in a joint government with the Cadets.

The Bolsheviks would gain by securing the possibility of agitating freely for their views and of striving to win influence within the Soviets under conditions of real and complete democracy. In words, "everybody" now recognises this freedom for the Bolsheviks. But in reality it is *impossible* under a bourgeois government, or under a government in which the bourgeoisie participates, or under any government other than the Soviets. Under a Soviet government such freedom would be *possible* (we do not say it would be guaranteed with absolute certainty, but it would be possible). For the sake of such a possibility, in such difficult times as the present, it would be worth agreeing to a compromise with the Soviet majority of the present day. *We* have nothing to fear from real democracy, for the tide of events is on our side, and even the course of development of the currents within the hostile (to us) Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties confirms that we are right.

The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries would gain in that they would at once obtain full possibility of carrying out the programme of *their bloc* with the support of an obviously overwhelming majority of the people, and in that they would guarantee themselves the "peaceful" use of their majority in the Soviets.

Of course, within this *bloc*, heterogeneous both because of the fact that it is a *bloc* and because the petty-bourgeois democrats are *always* less homogeneous than the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, two voices would probably make themselves heard.

One voice would say: "We cannot travel along the same road as the Bolsheviks and the revolutionary proletariat. The latter will make excessive demands anyway, and will entice the poor peasantry by demagogy. It will demand peace and a rupture with the Allies. That is impossible. We are better off and safer with the bourgeoisie; we have not parted ways with it, you know, we have only *quarrelled* with it temporarily and only over the Kornilov

incident. We have quarrelled, but we shall make it up. Moreover, the Bolsheviks are not 'ceding' us anything, for their attempts at insurrection are anyway doomed to failure, like the Commune of 1871."

The other voice would say: "The allusion to the Commune is very superficial and even foolish. For, in the first place, the Bolsheviks have after all learnt something since 1871; they would not neglect to seize the bank, they would not refrain from marching on Versailles; and under such conditions even the Commune might have been victorious. Besides, the Commune could not offer the people immediately what the Bolsheviks would be able to offer if they became the power, namely, land to the peasants, an immediate proposal for peace, genuine control over production, an honest peace with the Ukrainians, Finns, etc. The Bolsheviks, to use a slang expression, have ten times more 'trumps' in their hands than the Commune had. In the second place, a Commune, after all, would involve a serious civil war, the retardation of peaceful cultural development for a long time afterwards, a freer opportunity for the operations and machinations of the MacMahons and Kornilovs—and such operations are a menace to our whole bourgeois society. Is it good sense to run the risk of a Commune?

"But a Commune in Russia is unavoidable if we do not take power into our hands, if the situation remains as grave as it was from May 19 (6) to September 13 (August 31). Every revolutionary worker and soldier will inevitably think about the Commune and believe in it; he will inevitably attempt to realise it; for he will argue as follows: 'The people are perishing; war, famine and ruin are becoming ever more acute. Only the Commune can save us. Let us then perish, let us all die, but let us establish the Commune.' Such thoughts are inevitable among the workers, and it will not be as easy to crush the Commune now as it was in 1871. The Russian Commune will have allies all over the world, allies a hundred times stronger than those the Commune had in 1871. . . . Is it good sense to run the risk of a Commune? Neither can I agree that the Bolsheviks, strictly speaking, are not ceding us anything by their compromise. For in all civilised countries, civilised ministers during time of war value highly every agreement with the

proletariat, however slight. They value it very, very highly. And these are men of affairs, real ministers. Now the Bolsheviks are rapidly becoming stronger, notwithstanding repressions, notwithstanding the weakness of their press. . . . Is it good sense for us to run the risk of a Commune?

"We have a safe majority; the awakening of the poor peasantry is still far off; we are safe for our lifetime. I do not believe that in a peasant country the majority will follow the extremists. And against a recognised majority, in a truly democratic republic, revolt is impossible." This is what the second voice would say.

Perhaps there would be a third voice coming from among the adherents of Martov or Spiridonova, which would say: "It makes me indignant, 'comrades,' that both of you, talking of the Commune and the possibility of its taking place, unhesitatingly side with its opponents. In one form or another, both of you are on the side of those who suppressed the Commune. I will not undertake to agitate in favour of the Commune; I cannot promise beforehand to fight in its ranks as every Bolshevik will do; still, I must say that *if* the Commune, *in spite* of my efforts, does flare up, I shall rather help its defenders than its opponents. . . ."

The medley of voices in the "*bloc*" is great and unavoidable, for among the petty-bourgeois democrats a host of shades is represented—from the complete bourgeois, entirely eligible for a post in the government, to the semi-pauper who is as yet incapable of adopting the position of the proletarian. What will be the result of this discord of voices at any given moment, nobody knows.

* * *

The above lines were written on Friday, September 14 (1), but owing to accidental causes (under Kerensky, history will say, not all the Bolsheviks were free to choose their domicile) they did not reach the editorial office that day. And after reading Saturday's and today's, Sunday's, papers, I say to myself: Apparently, the proposal for a compromise is already too late. Apparently, the few days in which a peaceful development was still possible have already passed. Yes, everything points to the fact that they have already passed. In one way or another, Kerensky will abandon

both the Socialist-Revolutionary *Party* and the Socialist-Revolutionaries *themselves*, and will consolidate his position with the help of the bourgeoisie *without* the Socialist-Revolutionaries, thanks to their inaction. . . . Yes, to all appearances the days when by chance the road of peaceful development became possible have already passed. All that remains is to send these notes to the editor with the request to have them entitled "Belated Thoughts." Even belated thoughts are perhaps at times not devoid of interest.

September 14-16 (1-3), 1917

THE BOLSHEVIKS MUST ASSUME POWER

*A Letter to the Central Committee and to the Petrograd and
Moscow Committees of the Russian Social-Democratic
Labour Party*

HAVING obtained a majority in the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of both capitals, the Bolsheviks can, and must, take over the power of government.

They can do so because the active majority of the revolutionary elements of the people of both capitals is large enough to carry the masses, to overcome the resistance of the adversary, to smash him and to conquer power and retain it. For, by immediately proposing a democratic peace, by immediately giving the land to the peasants and by re-establishing the democratic institutions and liberties which have been mangled and shattered by Kerensky, the Bolsheviks will create a government which *nobody* will be able to overthrow.

The majority of the people are *on our side*. This was proved by the long and painful course of events from May 19 (6) to September 13 (August 31) and to September 25 (12). The majority gained in the Soviets of the capitals was a *result* of the fact that the people have developed in *our direction*. The vacillation of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks and the increase in the number of internationalists within their ranks prove the same thing.

The Democratic Conference represents *not* a majority of the revolutionary people, but *only the compromising upper stratum of the petty bourgeoisie*. One must not be deceived by the election figures; elections prove nothing. Compare the elections to the City Dumas of Petrograd and Moscow with the elections to the Soviets. Compare the elections in Moscow with the Moscow strike of August 25 (12). Here we have objective data regarding

the majority of revolutionary elements who are leading the masses.

The Democratic Conference is deceiving the peasants: it is giving them neither peace nor land.

A Bolshevik government *alone* will satisfy the demands of the peasantry.

* * *

Why must the Bolsheviks assume power *now*?

Because the impending surrender of Petrograd will render our chances a hundred times less favourable.

And while the army is headed by Kerensky and Co. it is not in our power to prevent the surrender of Petrograd.

Neither can we "wait" for the Constituent Assembly, for by surrendering Petrograd Kerensky and Co. can always *frustrate* the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. Our Party alone, having assumed power, can secure the convocation of the Constituent Assembly: and, having assumed power, it will accuse the other parties of procrastination and will be able to substantiate its accusations.

A separate peace between the British and German imperialists must be prevented, and can be prevented, but only by quick action.

The people are tired of the vacillations of the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries. Our victory in the capitals alone will draw the peasants over to our side.

* * *

We are concerned not with the "day," nor with the "moment" of insurrection in the narrow sense of the word. That will be decided by the common voice of those who are in contact with the workers and soldiers, with *the masses*.

The point is that at the Democratic Conference our Party has virtually *its own congress*, and this congress (whether it wishes to or not) must decide the *fate of the revolution*.

The point is to make the *task* clear to the Party. An *armed insurrection* in Petrograd and Moscow (with their regions), the conquest of power and the overthrow of the government must be

placed on the order of the day. We must consider *how* to agitate for this without expressly saying as much in the press.

We must remember and weigh the words of Marx: "*Insurrection is an art.*"

* * *

It would be naive to wait for a "formal" majority for the Bolsheviks; no revolution ever waits for that. Kerensky and Co. are not waiting either; they are preparing to surrender Petrograd. The wretched vacillations of the Democratic Conference are bound to exhaust the patience of the workers of Petrograd and Moscow. History will not forgive us if we do not assume power now.

There is no apparatus? There is an apparatus: the Soviets and the democratic organisations. The international situation just now, *on the eve* of the conclusion of a separate peace between the British and the Germans, is in *our favour*. If we propose peace to the nations now we shall win.

Power must be assumed in Moscow and in Petrograd at once (it does not matter which begins; even Moscow may begin); we shall win *absolutely and unquestionably*.

September 25-27 (12-14), 1917

MARXISM AND INSURRECTION

A Letter to the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party

ONE of the most vicious and probably most widespread distortions of Marxism practised by the prevailing "Socialist" parties consists in the opportunist lie that preparations for insurrection and generally the treatment of insurrection as an art are "Blanquism."

Bernstein, the leader of opportunism, earned himself a wretched notoriety by accusing Marxism of Blanquism, and when our present-day opportunists cry Blanquism they do not improve on or "enrich" the meagre "ideas" of Bernstein one jot.

Marxists are accused of Blanquism for regarding insurrection as an art! Can there be a more flagrant distortion of the truth, when not a single Marxist will deny that it was Marx who expressed himself on this score in the most definite, precise and categorical manner; that it was Marx who called insurrection precisely an *art*, saying that it must be treated as an art, that the first success must be *gained* and that one must proceed from success to success, never ceasing the offensive against the enemy, taking every advantage of his confusion, etc., etc.?

To be successful, insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class. That is the first point. Insurrection must rely upon the revolutionary spirit of the people. That is the second point. Insurrection must rely upon the *crucial moment* in the history of the growing revolution, when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and when the *vacillations* in the ranks of the enemies and in the ranks of the *weak, half-hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution* are strongest. That is the third point. And these three factors in the attitude towards insurrection distinguish *Marxism* from *Blanquism*.

But when these factors are operating it is a betrayal of Marxism and a betrayal of the revolution to refuse to regard insurrection as an *art*.

In order to show that the present moment is one in which the Party is *obliged* to admit that insurrection has been placed upon the order of the day by the whole course of objective events, and that it must treat insurrection as an art, it will perhaps be best to use the method of comparison, and to draw a parallel between July 16-17 (3-4) and the September days.

In the days of July 16-17 (3-4) it was possible to argue without trespassing against the truth that the right thing to do was to take power, for our enemies would in any case accuse us of rebellion and treat us like rebels. However, to have concluded that we could have seized power at that time would have been wrong because the objective conditions for a successful insurrection did not exist.

1) We still lacked the support of the class which is the vanguard of the revolution.

We still did not have a majority among the workers and soldiers of the capitals. Now, we have a majority in both Soviets. It was created solely by the history of July and August, by the experience of the ruthless treatment meted out to the Bolsheviks, and by the experience of the Kornilov affair.

2) There was no rising revolutionary spirit at that time among the people. There is that spirit now, after the Kornilov affair, as is proved by the situation in the provinces and by the seizure of power by the Soviets in many localities.

3) At that time there was no *vacillation* on any serious political scale among our enemies and among the irresolute petty bourgeoisie. Now their vacillation is enormous. Our main enemy, Allied and world imperialism (for world imperialism is being led by the "Allies"), *has begun to waver* between a war to a victorious conclusion and a separate peace directed against Russia. Our petty-bourgeois democrats, having clearly lost their majority among the people, have begun to vacillate enormously, and have rejected a *bloc*, i.e., a coalition, with the Cadets.

4) An insurrection on July 16-17 (3-4) would have been a

mistake because we could not have retained power either physically or politically. We could not have retained it physically in spite of the fact that at certain moments Petrograd was in our hands, because at that time our workers and soldiers would not have *fought and died* for the possession of Petrograd. There was not at that time that "savageness," nor that fierce hatred both of the Kerenskys and of the Tseretellis and Chernovs. Our people still had not been tempered by the experience of the persecution of the Bolsheviks in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks participated.

We would not have retained power politically on July 16-17 (3-4), because *before the Kornilov affair* the army and provinces might, and would, have marched against Petrograd.

The picture is now entirely different.

We have the following of the majority of a *class*, the vanguard of the revolution, the vanguard of the people, which is capable of carrying the masses with it.

We have the following of the *majority* of the people; for Chernov's resignation; while by no means the only symptom, is the most striking and obvious symptom that the peasantry *will not receive land* from a *bloc* with the Socialist-Revolutionaries (or from the Socialist-Revolutionaries themselves). And that is the central reason for the popular character of the revolution.

We have the advantage of a party that firmly knows the path it must follow, whereas *imperialism as a whole* and the *bloc* of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries are vacillating incredibly.

Our victory is assured, for the people are bordering on desperation, and we can show the people a sure way out; for during the "Kornilov days" we demonstrated to the people the value of our leadership, and subsequently *proposed* to the politicians of the *bloc* a compromise *which they rejected*, although their vacillations continued unremittingly.

It would be a profound mistake to think that our offer of a compromise has not *yet* been rejected, and that the "Democratic Conference" may *still* accept it. The compromise was proposed

by a party to parties; it could not have been proposed in any other way. It was rejected by the *parties*. The Democratic Conference is a Conference and nothing more. One thing must not be forgotten, namely, that at the Conference the *majority* of the revolutionary people, the poor and embittered peasantry, are not represented. It is a Conference of a minority of the people—that obvious truth must not be forgotten. It would be a profound error, it would be sheer parliamentary cretinism on our part, were we to regard the Democratic Conference as a parliament; for even if it *were* to proclaim itself a parliament, the sovereign parliament of the revolution, it would not be able to *decide* anything. The power of decision lies *outside* of the Conference; it lies in the working class quarters of Petrograd and Moscow.

All the objective conditions for a successful insurrection exist. We have the advantage of a situation in which *only* our success in the insurrection can put an end to that most painful thing on earth, vacillation, which has worn the people out; a situation in which *only* the success of our insurrection can foil the game of a separate peace directed against the revolution by publicly proposing a fuller, juster and earlier peace *to the benefit* of the revolution.

Finally, our Party alone can save Petrograd by a successful insurrection; for if our proposal for peace is rejected, if we do not secure even an armistice, then *we* shall become “defencists,” we shall place ourselves *at the head of the war parties*, we shall be the “*war party*” *par excellence*, and we shall fight the war in a truly revolutionary manner. We shall take all the bread and shoes away from the capitalists. We shall leave them only crusts, we shall dress them in bast shoes. We shall send all the bread and shoes to the front.

And we shall save Petrograd.

The resources, both material and spiritual, for a truly revolutionary war in Russia are still immense; the chances are a hundred to one that the Germans will grant us at least an armistice. And to secure an armistice now would in itself mean beating the *whole world*.

* * *

Having recognised that an insurrection on the part of the workers of Petrograd and Moscow is absolutely necessary in order to save the revolution and in order to save Russia from being "separately" divided up among the imperialists of both coalitions, we must, first, adapt our political tactics at the Conference to the conditions of the growing insurrection, and, secondly, we must show that our acceptance of the idea of Marx that insurrection must be regarded as an art is not merely a verbal acceptance.

At the Conference, we must immediately set about consolidating the Bolshevik fraction, without striving after numbers, and without fearing to leave the waverers in the camp of the waverers: they are more useful to the cause of the revolution *there* than in the camp of the resolute and devoted fighters.

We must prepare a brief declaration in the name of the Bolsheviks, sharply emphasising the irrelevance of long speeches and of "speeches" in general, the necessity for immediate action in order to save the revolution, the absolute necessity for a complete break with the bourgeoisie, for the removal of the whole of the present government, for a complete severance of relations with the Anglo-French imperialists, who are preparing a "separate" partition of Russia, and for the immediate transfer of the whole power *to the revolutionary democracy headed by the revolutionary proletariat*. Our declaration must consist of the briefest and bluntest formulation of this conclusion accompanied by a programme of proposals: peace for the peoples, land for the peasants, the confiscation of outrageous profits, and a check on the outrageous sabotage of production by the capitalists.

The briefer and blunter the declaration the better. Only, two other important points must be clearly indicated in it, namely, that the people are worn out by vacillation, that they are exhausted by the irresoluteness of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks; and that we are definitely breaking with these *parties* because they have betrayed the revolution.

Further. By immediately proposing a peace without annexations, by breaking immediately with the Allied imperialists and with all imperialists, either we shall immediately obtain an armis-

tice, or the entire revolutionary proletariat will rally to the defence of the country, and a truly just, truly revolutionary war will then be waged by the revolutionary democracy under the leadership of the proletariat.

Having announced this declaration, and having appealed for *decisions* and not talk, for *action* and not resolution-writing, our whole fraction must *proceed* to the *factories and the barracks*. Their place is there; the pulse of life is there; the force that will save the revolution is there; the motive force of the Democratic Conference is there.

There, in impassioned speeches, we must explain our programme and put the alternative: either the Conference adopts it in its *entirety*, or else insurrection. There is no middle course. Delay is impossible. The revolution is perishing.

By putting the question thus, by concentrating our entire fraction in the factories and barracks, *we shall be able to decide the best moment to launch the insurrection*.

And in order to treat insurrection in a Marxist way, *i.e.*, as an art, we must at the same time, without losing a single moment, organise a *general staff* of the insurrectionary detachments; we must distribute our forces; we must move the loyal regiments to the most important strategic points; we must surround the Alexandrinsky Theatre; we must occupy the Peter and Paul fortress; we must arrest the general staff and the government; against the military cadets and the Savage Division we must move such detachments as will rather die than allow the enemy to approach the centre of the city; we must mobilise the armed workers and call upon them to engage in a last desperate fight; we must occupy the telegraph and telephone stations at once, quarter *our* general staff of the insurrection at the central telephone station and connect it by telephone with all the factories, regiments, points of armed fighting, etc.

Of course, this is all by way of example, in order to *illustrate* the fact that at the present moment it is impossible to remain loyal to Marxism and to the revolution *without regarding insurrection as an art*.

September 26-27 (13-14), 1917

THE CRISIS HAS MATURED

THE beginning of October (end of September) undoubtedly marked a definite turning point in the history of the Russian revolution and, to all appearances, of the world revolution also.

The world working class revolution began with the action of individuals, whose supreme courage represented everything honest that remains of the decayed official "Socialism," which is in reality social-chauvinism. Liebknecht in Germany, Adler in Austria, MacLean in England—these are the best known names of those isolated heroes who have taken upon themselves the arduous mission of being the forerunners of the world revolution.

The second stage in the historical preparation of this revolution was a widespread mass ferment, expressing itself in the split of the official parties, in illegal publications and in street demonstrations. The protest against the war became stronger, and the number of victims of government persecution increased. The prisons of countries famed for their observance of law and even for their freedom—Germany, France, Italy, and Great Britain—became filled with tens and hundreds of internationalists, opponents of the war and advocates of a working class revolution.

The third stage has now begun. This stage may be called the eve of revolution. Mass arrests of Party leaders in free Italy, and particularly the beginning of mutinies in the German army, are indisputable symptoms that a great and crucial moment is at hand, that we are *on the eve of a world-wide revolution*.

There can be no doubt that even before this there were isolated cases of mutiny among the troops in Germany, but they were so small, so isolated and weak, that it was possible to hush them up—and that was the main thing in order to check the *mass contagion* of seditious action. Finally, a similar movement developed in the navy which it was impossible to hush up, despite all the severities

of the German military regime, elaborated with such amazing minuteness of detail and observed with such incredible pedantry.

Doubt is out of the question. We are on the threshold of a world proletarian revolution. And since we, the Russian Bolsheviks, alone of all the proletarian internationalists of the world, enjoy a comparatively large measure of freedom, since we have a legal party and a score or so of papers, since we have the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of the capitals on our side, and since we have the support of a majority of the masses of the people in a time of revolution, to us indeed may the saying be applied: to whom much has been given, of him much shall be demanded.

II

The crucial point of the revolution in Russia has undoubtedly arrived.

In a peasant country, and under a revolutionary, republican government, which enjoys the support of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, parties that only recently dominated the petty-bourgeois democracy, a *peasant revolt* is developing.

It is incredible, but it is a fact.

And we Bolsheviks are not surprised by this fact: we have always maintained that the government of the notorious "coalition" with the bourgeoisie was a government of *betrayal* of democracy and of the revolution, that it was a government of *imperialist* slaughter, a government that *protected* the capitalists and landlords, *from* the people.

Owing to the deception practised by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, there still exists in Russia, under a republic and in time of revolution, a government of capitalists and landlords side by side with the Soviets. Such is the bitter and sinister fact. Is it then a matter for surprise that in Russia, in view of the incredible hardship inflicted on the people by the dragging out of the imperialist war and by its consequences, a peasant revolt has begun and is spreading? Is it a matter for surprise that the enemies of the Bolsheviks, the leaders of the *official* Socialist-Revolutionary Party, the very party that supported the "coalition" all along, the party that until the last few days or weeks had the

majority of the people on its side, the party that continues to harry and abuse the "new" Socialist-Revolutionaries, who have realised that the policy of coalition is a betrayal of the interests of the peasants—is it a matter for surprise that these leaders of the official Socialist-Revolutionary Party, in an editorial in their official organ, *Dyelo Naroda*, of October 12 (September 29), wrote as follows:

"... Practically nothing has been done up to the present to put an end to the conditions of servitude that still prevail in the country districts of Central Russia.... The bill for the regulation of land relations in rural areas, which was introduced in the Provisional Government long ago, and which has even passed such a purgatory as the Judicial Conference, has got hopelessly stuck in some bureau.... Are we not right in asserting that our republican government is still a long way from having rid itself of the old habits of the tsarist administration, and that the dead hand of Stolypin is still strongly felt in the methods of the revolutionary ministers?"

This is written by the official Socialist-Revolutionaries! Just think: the supporters of the coalition are *forced* to admit that in a peasant country, after seven months of revolution, "practically nothing has been done to put an end to the servitude" of the peasants, to their enslavement to the landlords! These Socialist-Revolutionaries are *forced* to call their colleague, Kerensky, and his gang of ministers "*Stolypinists*."

Could we have coming from the camp of our opponents more eloquent testimony to the fact not only that the coalition has collapsed and that the official Socialist-Revolutionaries who tolerate Kerensky have become a party *hostile to the people, hostile to the peasant, and counter-revolutionary*, but also that the whole Russian revolution has now reached a state of crisis?

A peasant revolt in a peasant country against the government of Kerensky, a Socialist-Revolutionary, Nikitin and Gvozdev, Mensheviks, and other ministers representing capital and the interests of the landlords! The crushing of this revolt by *military force* by a republican government.

In the face of such facts, can one be a conscientious partisan of the proletariat and yet deny that a crisis has matured, that the revolution is passing through an extremely critical moment, that the victory of the government over the peasant revolt would now sound the death knell of the revolution, the final triumph of the Kornilovists?

III

It is obvious that if in a peasant country, after seven months of a democratic republic, matters have come to the pass of a peasant revolt, it is irrefutable proof that the revolution is suffering nationwide collapse, that it is passing through a crisis of unprecedented severity, and that the forces of counter-revolution have gone the *full limit*.

That is obvious. In the face of such a fact as a peasant revolt all other political symptoms, even were they to contradict the fact that a national crisis is maturing, would have no significance whatsoever.

But, on the contrary, all the symptoms do indicate that a nation-wide crisis has matured.

After the agrarian question, the most important question in the state life of Russia is the national question, particularly for the petty-bourgeois masses of the population. And at the "Democratic" Conference, which was packed by Messrs. Tseretelli and Co., we find that the "national" *curia*¹ takes second place for radicalism, yielding only to the trade unions, and *exceeding* the *curia* of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in the percentage of votes cast *against* the coalition (40 out of 55). The Kerensky government—which is suppressing the peasant revolt—is withdrawing the revolutionary troops from Finland in order to strengthen the reactionary Finnish bourgeoisie. In the Ukraine, the conflicts of the Ukrainians in general, and of the Ukrainian troops in particular, with the government are becoming more and more frequent.

Furthermore, let us take the army, which in war-time is of vital importance to the life of the state. We find that the army in Finland and the Baltic fleet have completely *parted ways* with the government. We have the testimony of the officer Dubasov, a non-Bolshevik, who speaks in the name of the whole front and declares in a manner more revolutionary than that of any Bolshevik that the soldiers will not fight any longer. We have the governmental reports stating that the soldiers are in a state of "agitation" and that it is impossible to guarantee the maintenance of "order" (*i.e.*, the participation of the troops in the suppression of the peasant

¹ *Curia*—in this case, delegate group.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

revolt). We have, finally, the voting in Moscow, where fourteen thousand out of seventeen thousand soldiers voted for the Bolsheviks.

This vote in the elections to the Borough Dumas in Moscow is one of the most striking symptoms of the profound change which has taken place in the general mood of the nation. It is generally known that Moscow is more petty-bourgeois than Petrograd. It is a fact frequently corroborated and indisputable that the Moscow proletariat has an incomparably greater number of connections with the countryside, that it enjoys greater peasant sympathy and is closer to the sentiments of the peasant.

Yet in Moscow the vote cast for the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks dropped from 70 per cent in June to 18 per cent. The petty bourgeoisie has turned away from the coalition; the people have turned away from it; of that there can be no doubt. The Cadets have increased their strength from 17 per cent to 30 per cent, but they remain a minority, a hopeless minority, notwithstanding the fact that they have been obviously joined by the "Right" Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the "Right" Mensheviks. *Russkiye Vedomosti*¹ states that the *absolute* number of votes cast for the Cadets fell from 67,000 to 62,000. Only the vote cast for the Bolsheviks increased—from 34,000 to 82,000. They received 47 per cent of the total vote. There can be no shadow of doubt that we, together with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, now have a majority in the Soviets, in the army, and *in the country*.

Among the symptoms that have not only a symptomatic, but also a real significance must be counted the fact that the army of railroad and postal employees, who are of immense importance from the general, economic, political and military point of view, continue to be in sharp conflict with the government, while even the Menshevik defencists are dissatisfied with "their" minister, Nikitin, and the official Socialist-Revolutionaries call Kerensky and Co. "Stolypinists." Is it not clear that such "support" to the government by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries can have only a negative value?

¹ *Russian News*—the Moscow organ of the Cadets.—Ed.

IV¹

V

Ay, the leaders of the Central Executive Committee are pursuing the correct tactics of defending the bourgeoisie and the landlords. And there is not the slightest doubt that if the Bolsheviks allowed themselves to be caught in the trap of constitutional illusions—"faith" in the Congress of Soviets and in the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, "waiting" for the Congress of Soviets, and so forth—they would be *miserable traitors* to the proletarian cause.

They would be traitors to the cause, for by their conduct they would be betraying the German revolutionary workers who have started a revolt in the fleet. To "wait" for the Congress of Soviets and so forth under such circumstances would be a *betrayal of internationalism*, a betrayal of the cause of the international socialist revolution.

For internationalism consists not in phrases, not in protestations of solidarity, and not in resolutions, but in deeds.

The Bolsheviks would be traitors to the *peasantry*, for to tolerate the suppression of the peasant revolt by a government which *even Dyelo Naroda* compares with the Stolypinists would be to *ruin* the whole revolution, irrevocably. An outcry is raised about anarchy and about the increasing apathy of the masses; but what else can the masses be but apathetic to the elections, when the peasantry has been *driven to revolt* while the so-called "revolutionary democrats" are patiently tolerating its suppression by military force?

The Bolsheviks would be traitors to democracy and to freedom; for to tolerate the suppression of the peasant revolt at such a moment would *mean* allowing the elections to the Constituent Assembly to be juggled *in the same way*—and even more heinously and cruelly—as the "Democratic Conference" and the "Pre-parliament"¹ were juggled.

¹ This chapter is missing from the MS., and was not printed with the rest in No. 30 of *Rabochy Put*, probably from motives of secrecy. It therefore remains unknown.—Ed.

The crisis has matured. The whole future of the Russian revolution is at stake. The honour of the Bolshevik Party is in question. The future of the international workers' revolution for socialism is at stake.

The crisis has matured. . . .

N. LENIN

October 12 (September 29), 1917

* * *

Everything to this point may be published, but what follows is to be distributed among the members of the Central Committee, the Petrograd Committee, the Moscow Committee, and the Soviets.

VI

What, then, is to be done? We must *aussprechen, was ist*, state the facts, admit the truth that there is a tendency, or an opinion, in our Central Committee and among the leaders of our Party which favours *waiting* for the Congress of Soviets, and is *opposed* to the immediate seizure of power and an immediate insurrection. That tendency, or opinion, must be *overcome*.

Otherwise the Bolsheviks will cover themselves with *eternal shame* and *destroy themselves* as a party.

For to miss such a moment and to "wait" for the Congress of Soviets would be *utter idiocy*, or *sheer treachery*.

It would be sheer treachery towards the German workers. Are we to wait until their revolution *begins*? In that case even the Lieber-Dans would be in favour of "supporting" it. But it *cannot* begin as long as Kerensky, Kishkin and Co. are in power.

It would be sheer treachery towards the peasantry. To allow the revolt of the peasants to be suppressed when we control the Soviets of both *capitals* would be to *lose*, and *justly lose*, every ounce of the peasants' confidence; we would become equal in the eyes of the peasants to the Lieber-Dans and other scoundrels.

To "wait" for the Congress of Soviets would be utter idiocy, for it would mean losing weeks at a time when weeks and even days decide everything. It would mean faint-heartedly renouncing the seizure of power. for on November 14-15 (1-2) it will have

become impossible (both politically and technically, since the Cossacks would be mobilised for the day of the revolt so foolishly "appointed" ¹).

To "wait" for the Congress of Soviets is idiocy, for the Congress will *give nothing, and can give nothing!*

"Moral" importance? Strange indeed, to talk of the "importance" of resolutions and negotiations with the Lieber-Dans when we know that the Soviets *support* the peasants and that the peasant revolt is *being suppressed!* That would be reducing the *Soviets* to the status of wretched talkshops. First defeat Kerensky, then call the Congress.

The success of the insurrection is now *guaranteed* for the Bolsheviks: 1) we can (if we do not "wait" for the Soviet Congress) launch a *sudden* attack from three points—from Petrograd, from Moscow and from the Baltic fleet;² 2) we have slogans that guarantee us support: Down with the government that is suppressing the revolt of the peasants against the landlords! 3) we have a majority *in the country*; 4) the disorganisation among the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries is complete; 5) we are technically in a position to seize power in Moscow (where the start might even be made, so as to catch the enemy unawares); 6) we have *thousands* of armed workers and soldiers in Petrograd who could *at once* seize the Winter Palace, the general staff, the telephone exchange and the large printing establishments. Nothing will be able to drive us out of these positions, while agitational work *in the army* will be such as to make it *impossible* to combat this government of peace, of land for the peasants, and so forth.

If we were to attack at once, suddenly, from three points, Petrograd, Moscow and the Baltic fleet, the chances are a hundred to one that we would succeed with smaller sacrifices than on July 16-18 (3-5), because *the troops will not advance* against a govern-

¹ To "convene" the Congress of Soviets for November 2 (October 20), in order to decide upon the seizure of power—how does that differ from foolishly "appointing" an uprising? We can seize power now, whereas on November 2-11 (October 20-29) you will not be allowed to seize power.

² What has the Party done to *study* the disposition of the troops, etc? What has it done to conduct the insurrection as an "art"? Mere talk in the Central Committee, and so on!

ment of peace. Even though Kerensky *already* has "loyal" cavalry, etc., in Petrograd, if we were to attack from two sides, and with the sympathy of the army *on our side*, he would be compelled to surrender. If with such chances as we have at present we do not seize power, then all talk of transferring the power to the Soviets becomes a *lie*.

To refrain from seizing power now, to "wait," to indulge in talk in the Central Executive Committee, to confine ourselves to "fighting for the organ" (the Soviet), "fighting for the Congress," is to *doom the revolution to failure*.

In view of the fact that the Central Committee has even *left unanswered* the persistent demands I have been making for such a policy ever since the beginning of the Democratic Conference, in view of the fact that the central organ is *deleting* from my articles all references to such glaring errors on the part of the Bolsheviks as the shameful decision to participate in the Pre-parliament, the presentation of seats to the Mensheviks in the presidium of the Soviet, etc., etc.—I am compelled to regard this as a "subtle" hint of the unwillingness of the Central Committee even to consider this question, a subtle hint that I should keep my mouth shut, and as a proposal for me to retire.

I am compelled to *tender my resignation from the Central Committee*, which I hereby do, reserving for myself the freedom to agitate among the rank and file of the Party and at the Party Congress.

For it is my profound conviction that if we "wait" for the Congress of Soviets and let the moment pass now, we shall *ruin* the revolution.

N. LENIN

October 12 (September 29)

P. S. There are a number of facts which go to prove that *even* the Cossack regiments will not move against a government of peace! And how many are they? Where are they? And will not the entire army dispatch units *for our support*?

October 12 (September 29), 1917

FROM A PUBLICIST'S DIARY

THE MISTAKES OF OUR PARTY

Friday, October 5 (September 22), 1917

THE more one reflects on the significance of the so-called Democratic Conference, the more attentively one observes it as an onlooker—and it is said that the onlooker sees most of the game—the more firmly convinced one becomes that our Party committed a mistake by participating in it. It should have been boycotted. It will be asked, what is the use of analysing this question? The past cannot be undone. But to make such an objection in regard to past tactics is obviously unjustifiable. We have always condemned, and as Marxists we are obliged to condemn, “hand-to-mouth” tactics. Momentary successes are not good enough for us. And generally plans for a minute or a day are not good enough for us. We must constantly test ourselves by *studying* the chain of political events in their entirety, their causal relations and their results. By analysing the errors of yesterday we shall learn to avoid errors today and tomorrow.

A new revolution is manifestly developing in the country, a revolution of *different* classes (as compared with those which made the revolution against tsarism). At that time it was a revolution of the proletariat, the peasantry and the bourgeoisie in alliance with Anglo-French finance capital against tsarism.

The revolution now developing is a revolution of the proletariat and the majority of the peasants, namely, the poor peasantry, against the bourgeoisie, against its ally, Anglo-French finance capital, and against its government apparatus headed by the Bonapartist Kerensky.

We shall not dwell at present on the facts which testify to the development of a new revolution, since, judging by the articles in

our central organ, *Rabochy Put*, the Party has already made clear its view on this point. The development of a new revolution is a phenomenon which, it seems, is generally recognised by the Party. Of course, it will be necessary to summarise the facts of this development, but that must form the subject of other articles.

At the present moment it is more important to direct attention chiefly to the class differences between the old and the new revolution, to an examination of the political situation and of our tasks from the point of view of the fundamental factor, *i.e.*, the relation of classes. At that time, during the first revolution, the vanguard consisted of the workers and the soldiers, *i.e.*, of the proletariat and the advanced sections of the peasantry.

This vanguard *carried* with it not only many of the worst, the vacillating elements of the petty bourgeoisie (remember the indecision of the Mensheviks and the Trudoviki over the question of a republic), but also the monarchist party of the Cadets, the liberal bourgeoisie, which it made republican. Why was such a transformation possible?

Because for the bourgeoisie economic domination is everything, while the form of political domination is subsidiary. The bourgeoisie can dominate just as well under a republic; indeed, its domination is even more secure under a republic, since, no matter what changes take place in the composition of the government or in the composition and the grouping of the ruling parties, under that political order they do not affect the interests of the bourgeoisie.

Of course, the bourgeoisie stood, and will stand, for a monarchy, because the grosser, the military, form of protection of capital which is exercised by monarchist institutions is more obvious and more to the taste of the capitalists and landlords. But, when strong pressure was exercised "from below," the bourgeoisie always and everywhere "reconciled" itself to a republic, if only to preserve its economic domination intact.

Now, however, the proletariat and the poor peasantry, *i.e.*, the majority of the people, have assumed such a relation towards the bourgeoisie and towards "Allied" (and world) imperialism that they *cannot possibly carry the bourgeoisie along with them*. More-

ver, the leaders of the *petty bourgeoisie* and the more wealthy tratta of the *democratic petty bourgeoisie* are obviously opposed to a new revolution. This fact is so patent that it is not necessary to dwell on it now. Messieurs the Lieber-Dans, Tseretellis and Chernovs provide a clear illustration of the fact.

The relation of classes has changed. That is the whole essence of the matter.

Other classes now stand facing each other "on the two sides of the barricade."

That is the main thing.

That, and that *alone*, is the *scientific* justification for speaking of a *new* revolution, which—arguing purely theoretically, in the abstract—might have been accomplished legally if, for instance, the Constituent Assembly, convoked by the bourgeoisie, had proved to have a majority opposed to the bourgeoisie, a majority of the parties of the workers and the poor peasants.

The objective interrelation of classes, the part they play (economically and politically) both outside and inside representative institutions of a given type; the rise or fall of the revolution; the relation between extra-parliamentary and parliamentary methods of struggle—these are the chief and fundamental objective factors which must be taken into account if the tactics of boycott or participation are to be decided not arbitrarily, and not according to one's "sympathies," but according to Marxist methods.

The experience of our revolution clearly indicates the Marxist method of approach to the question of a boycott.

Why was the boycott of the Bulygin Duma tactically correct?

Because it was in accordance with the actual relation of social forces in their development. It sounded the note of the rising revolution for the overthrow of the old order, which, in order to divert the people from the revolution, wanted to convoke a compromising, clumsily counterfeited institution (the Bulygin Duma), offering not the slightest prospect of making any real beginnings of parliamentarism. The non-parliamentary methods of struggle at the disposal of the proletariat and the peasantry were more effective. These were the factors which determined the tactics of

boycotting the Bulygin Duma—correct tactics which took the objective situation into account.

Why were the tactics of boycotting the Third Duma mistaken?

Because they depended solely on the “striking effect” of the boycott slogan and on the loathing for the brutally reactionary character of the “pigsty” of the regime of June 3. But the actual situation, on the one hand, was that the revolution was in a state of extreme decline and was still declining. The possession of a parliamentary base (even within the “pigsty”) was of tremendous political importance for the revival of the revolution, since extra-parliamentary opportunities for propaganda, agitation and organisation were either non-existent or extremely inadequate. On the other hand, the brutally reactionary character of the Third Duma did not prevent it from serving as an organ of the true relation of classes, namely, a Stolypin combination of the monarchy and the bourgeoisie. The country had to live through this new relation of classes.

It was these factors that went to shape the tactics of participating in the Third Duma, tactics which correctly estimated the objective situation.

One has only to reflect on these lessons from experience, on the conditions which go to determine a Marxist solution of the question of boycott or participation, in order to become convinced of the absolute falsity of the tactics of participating in the “Democratic Conference,” the “Democratic Council,” or in the Pre-parliament.

On the one hand, we have the development of a new revolution. War is in the ascendant. Extra-parliamentary opportunities for propaganda, agitation and organisation are tremendous. The value of the “parliamentary” tribune in this Pre-parliament is insignificant. On the other hand, this Pre-parliament neither expresses nor “serves” any new relation of classes; for instance, the peasantry is here worse represented than in the already existing organs (the Soviets of Peasants’ Deputies). The Pre-parliament is essentially a Bonapartist *fraud*, not only in the sense that the filthy gang of Lieber-Dans, Tseretellis and Chernovs, in conjunc-

tion with Kerensky and Co., have *stacked* and faked this Tseretelli-Bulygin Duma, but also in the deeper sense that the only aim of the Pre-parliament is to trick the masses, to fool the workers and peasants, to divert them from the new and growing revolution, and to throw dust in the eyes of the oppressed classes by decking in a new garb the old, bedraggled, threadbare "coalition" with the bourgeoisie already experienced (in other words, the transformation of Messrs. Tseretelli and Co. by the bourgeoisie into jesters who help to keep the people in subjection to imperialism in the imperialist war).

"We are weak now," the tsar said to his feudal landlords in August 1905. "Our power is shaky. The tide of the workers' and peasants' revolution is rising. We must fool the simpleton. We must dangle a carrot before his eyes. . . ."

"We are weak now," the present "tsar," the Bonapartist Kerensky, says to the Cadets, to the non-party Tit Tityches,¹ to the Plekhanovs, Breshkovskayas and Co. "Our power is shaky. The tide of the workers' and peasants' revolution against the bourgeoisie is rising. We must fool the democracy by lending new colours to the clown's costume which the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik 'leaders of the revolutionary democracy,' our dear friends the Tseretellis and Chernovs, have been wearing since May 19 (6), 1917,² in order to fool the people. We can easily dangle the carrot of a 'Pre-parliament' before their eyes."

"We are strong now," the tsar said to his feudal landlords in June 1907. "The tide of the workers' and peasants' revolution is receding. But we cannot maintain our power in the old way; deception is not enough. A new policy is needed in the countryside, a new economic and political *bloc* is needed with the Guchkovs and Milyukovs, with the bourgeoisie."

The three situations—August 1905, September 1917, and June 1907—may be presented thus in order the more clearly to demonstrate the objective foundations of the tactics of boycott and their

¹ *Tit Titych*—a merchant ridiculed in one of Ostrovsky's comedies.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

² The date of formation of the first coalition government, in which the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries participated.—*Ed.*

connection with the interrelation of classes. The oppressed classes are always being deceived by the oppressors, but the purpose of the deception is different at different historical moments. Tactics cannot be based merely on the fact that the oppressors deceive the people; tactics must be determined by an analysis of the interrelation of classes *as a whole* and of the development of the struggle both inside and outside parliament.

Participation in the Pre-parliament is *mistaken* tactics; it does not correspond with the objective relation of classes and with the objective situation of the moment.

We should have boycotted the Democratic Conference; we all made a mistake in not doing so. But a mistake is not conscious deceit. We shall correct the mistake, provided there is a sincere desire to support the revolutionary struggle of the masses, provided we earnestly reflect on the objective foundations of our tactics.

We must boycott the Pre-parliament. We must turn to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, to the trade unions, to the masses in general. We must call upon them to fight. It is *to them* we must issue the correct and definite slogan: Disperse Kerensky's Bonapartist gang and *his* spurious Pre-parliament, this Tseretelli-Bulygin Duma. The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, even after the Kornilov affair, refused to accept our compromise proposing a peaceful transfer of power to the Soviets (in which *at that time* we had *not* yet a majority). They have again sunk into a morass of filthy and mean bargains with the Cadets. Down with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries! Fight them mercilessly! Ruthlessly expel them from **all** revolutionary organisations! No negotiations and no communication with these *friends of the Kishkins*, these friends of the Kornilovist landlords and capitalists!

Saturday, October 6 (September 23)

* * *

Trotsky was for the boycott. Bravo, Comrade Trotsky!

In the fraction of Bolsheviks assembled for the Democratic Conference boycottism has been defeated.

Long live the boycott!

We cannot and must not under any circumstances reconcile ourselves to participation. A fraction of one of the Conferences is not the highest body in the Party. Ay, and even the decisions of the highest bodies are subject to revision in accordance with actual experience.

We must at all costs strive to secure a decision in favour of boycott at the Plenum of the Central Executive Committee and at an extraordinary congress of the Party. We must make the question of boycott the platform for the elections to the congress and for *all* elections within the Party. The *masses* must be drawn into the discussion of this question. The class conscious workers must be got to take the matter into their hands, to conduct the discussion and bring pressure to bear upon the *leaders*.

There is not the slightest doubt of the vacillation among the leaders of our Party, vacillation which may become *fatal*; for the struggle is developing, and, under certain conditions, at a certain moment, vacillation may be *fatal* to the cause. We must mobilise all our forces in the struggle before it is too late; we must insist that the party of the revolutionary proletariat conduct a correct line.

Not all is well among the "parliamentary" leaders of our Party; more attention must be paid to them, more vigilance must be exercised over them by the workers; the sphere of competence of parliamentary fractions must be more rigidly defined.

The mistake committed by our Party is obvious. The fighting party of the advanced class is not afraid of mistakes. The danger is when one persists in one's mistake, when false pride prevents recognition of one's mistake and its correction.

Sunday, October 7 (September 24)

* * *

The Congress of Soviets has been postponed until November 2 (October 20). At the pace at which Russia is now living, this is almost equivalent to postponing it to the Greek Kalends. The comedy staged by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks after May 3-4 (April 20-21) is being repeated.

October 5-7 (September 22-24), 1917

THE AIMS OF THE REVOLUTION

RUSSIA is a petty-bourgeois country. The vast majority of the population belongs to this class. Its vacillation between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is inevitable. Only when it joins the proletariat will the victory of the cause of the revolution, of the cause of peace, freedom and land for the toilers, be secured—easily, peacefully, swiftly and smoothly.

The course of our revolution reveals this vacillation in practice. Let us then not harbour any illusions concerning the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties; let us keep firmly to our class proletarian path. The poverty of the poor peasants, the horrors of the war, the horrors of the famine—all these are bringing home more and more clearly to the masses the correctness of the proletarian path, the necessity of supporting the proletarian revolution.

The “peaceful” petty-bourgeois hopes in a “coalition” with the bourgeoisie, in compromises with the bourgeoisie, in the possibility of “calmly” waiting for an “early” convocation of the Constituent Assembly and so forth—these hopes are being mercilessly, cruelly and implacably dashed to the ground by the course of the revolution. The Kornilov affair was the last cruel lesson, a great lesson, a lesson which supplemented thousands and thousands of small lessons of deception practised on the workers and peasants by the local capitalists and landlords, of deception practised on the soldiers by the officers, and so on and so forth.

Discontent, indignation and bitterness are spreading in the army and among the peasants and workers. The “coalition” of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks with the bourgeoisie, which promises everything and does nothing, is irritating the masses, opening their eyes to the truth and driving them to revolt.

The opposition of the “Lefts” is growing among the Socialist-

Revolutionaries (Spiridonova and others) and among the Mensheviks (Martov and others), and already embraces 40 per cent of the "Council" and "Congress" of these parties, while *below*, among the proletariat and the peasantry, particularly the poor peasantry, the *majority* of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are "*Lefts*."

The Kornilov affair is instructive. The Kornilov affair has proved very instructive.

One does not know whether the Soviets can now go farther than the leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and thus secure a peaceful development of the revolution, or whether they will continue to mark time, and thus render a proletarian uprising inevitable.

That one does not know.

It is our business to help in every possible way to secure a "last" chance for a peaceful development of the revolution. We can help to bring this about by expounding our programme, by explaining its general national character and its absolute harmony with the interests and demands of the enormous majority of the population.

The following lines are an attempt at such an exposition of our programme.

Let us take this programme to the rank and file, to the masses, to the office employees, to the workers, to the peasants, not only to our own, but particularly to those who follow the Socialist-Revolutionaries, to the non-party elements, to the unenlightened. Let us endeavour to inspire them to form their independent judgment, to make their own decisions, to send *their* own delegations to the Conference, to the Soviets, to the government. Then our work will not have been in vain, *no matter what* the outcome of the Conference may be. It will prove useful for the Conference, for the elections to the Constituent Assembly, and for every political activity generally.

Events are proving that the Bolshevik programme and tactics are correct. From May 3 (April 20) to the Kornilov affair—what a crowded span!

Experience during that span taught the *masses*, the *oppressed*

classes, a great deal; the leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks have completely parted ways with the masses. This will be revealed best of all by a concrete programme, if we succeed in securing its discussion among the masses.

THE FATAL DANGER OF COMPROMISE WITH THE CAPITALISTS

1) To leave even a few representatives of the bourgeoisie in the government, to leave such notorious Kornilovists in power as Generals Alexeyev, Klembovsky, Bagratyon and Gagarin, or such as have proved their utter impotence when confronted by the bourgeoisie and their *penchant* for Bonapartist action, like Kerensky, is to throw the door wide open to famine and inevitable economic catastrophe, which the capitalists are intentionally accelerating and intensifying, and to a military catastrophe; for the army hates the general staff and has no enthusiasm for the imperialist war. Moreover, if the Kornilovist generals and officers remain in power they will, undoubtedly, *deliberately open the front* to the Germans, as they did in the case of Galicia and Riga. Only by the formation of a new government on a new basis, as explained below, can this be prevented. After all we have gone through since May 3 (April 20), were the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to continue any kind of compromise with the bourgeoisie it would be not so much a mistake as a direct betrayal of the people and the revolution.

POWER TO THE SOVIETS

2) The entire power of the state must pass exclusively to the representatives of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, acting in accordance with a definite programme, and the government must be fully answerable to the Soviets. New elections to the Soviets must be held immediately, both in order to register the experiences gained by the people during the recent weeks of revolution, which have been so rich in events, and in order to eliminate crying injustices that have in places remained uncorrected (non-proportional and unequal elections, etc.).

In the localities, where democratically elected institutions still

do not exist, and in the army, the power must be transferred exclusively to the local Soviets and to commissars elected by them, and to other exclusively elective institutions.

The arming of the workers and of the revolutionary troops, *i.e.*, those who have in practice proved their ability to suppress the Kornilovists, must be effected unconditionally and universally with the full support of the state.

PEACE TO THE NATIONS

3) The Soviet government must *immediately* make proposals to *all* the belligerent nations (*i.e.*, simultaneously both to their governments and to the masses of workers and peasants) for the conclusion without delay of a general peace on democratic conditions, and an immediate armistice (at least for three months).

The chief condition for a democratic peace is the renunciation of annexations—not in the mistaken sense that all the powers are to receive back what they have lost, but in the only correct sense that *every* nationality, without a single exception, both in Europe and in the colonies, shall obtain the freedom and the possibility of deciding for itself whether it shall become a *separate* state or whether it shall form part of another state.

Proposing these conditions of peace, the Soviet government must itself immediately proceed to put them into effect, *i.e.*, it must publish and repudiate the secret treaties by which we are still bound, treaties which were concluded by the tsar and which promise the Russian capitalists the pillage of Turkey, Austria, etc. Then, it is our duty immediately to satisfy the demands of the Ukrainians and the Finns. We must guarantee them, as well as all the other non-Russian nationalities in Russia, full freedom, including freedom of secession. The same must apply to the *whole* of Armenia; we must undertake to evacuate it, as well as the Turkish lands occupied by us, and so forth.

Such conditions of peace will not be favourably received by the capitalists; but they will be received by all the peoples with such tremendous sympathy, they will cause such a great, world-historic outburst of enthusiasm and such general indignation

against the dragging out of this predatory war, that it is most probable that we shall at once obtain an armistice and consent to the commencement of peace negotiations. For the workers' revolution against the war is irresistibly growing everywhere; and it can be advanced not by talk of peace (with which the workers and peasants have so long been deceived by *all* the imperialist governments, including our own, the Kerensky government) but by breaking with the capitalists and making proposals for peace.

If the most improbable eventuates, *viz.*, if not a single belligerent state consents even to an armistice, then, as far as we are concerned, the war will really become a war forced upon us, a really just and defensive war. The mere recognition of this fact by the proletariat and the poor peasantry will render Russia many times stronger even from the military point of view, especially after we have completely broken with the capitalists, who are robbing the people; not to mention the fact that under such conditions the war on our part will in actual fact be a war in alliance with the oppressed classes of all countries, a war in alliance with the oppressed nations of the whole world.

In particular, the people must be cautioned against the assertion of the capitalists, which sometimes influences the more timorous and the philistines, that in the event of a rupture of the present predatory alliance with the British and other capitalists the latter are capable of doing serious damage to the Russian revolution. That assertion is utterly false, for the "financial aid of the Allies," while enriching the bankers, "supports" the Russian workers and peasants as the rope supports the hanged man. There is plenty of bread, coal, oil and iron in Russia; it is only necessary to get rid of the landlords and the capitalists who are robbing the people in order to secure a proper distribution of these products. As to the danger of a war against the Russian people on the part of their present Allies, the assumption that the French and Italians are capable of combining their armies with the Germans in order to attack Russia, when she has proposed a just peace, is utterly absurd. And as for England, America, and Japan, even were they to declare war on Russia (which would be extremely difficult for

them, both in view of the unpopularity of such a war among the masses and in view of the divergence of the material interests of the capitalists of those countries as to the partition of Asia, and particularly as to the plundering of China), they could not cause Russia a hundredth part of the damage and misery which the war with Germany, Austria, and Turkey entails.

THE LAND TO THE TOILERS

4) The Soviet government must immediately proclaim the abolition of private property in the landed estates without compensation, and place these lands under the control of peasant committees, pending the decision of the Constituent Assembly. These peasant committees shall also be entrusted with the control of the farm property of the landed estates, which shall unconditionally be placed principally at the disposal of the poor peasants free of charge.

These measures, which have long been demanded by the vast majority of the peasants, both in resolutions of their congresses and in hundreds of instructions from local peasants' assemblies (as may be seen, for instance, from the summary of 242 Instructions published in the *Izvestiya* of the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies), are absolutely essential and urgent. Procrastination, from which the peasantry suffered so much during the "coalition" government, cannot further be tolerated.

Any government that delayed in putting these measures into effect would have to be recognised as a government hostile to the people and deserving of being overthrown and crushed by the revolt of the workers and peasants. Conversely, only a government that carries these measures into effect will be a government of the people.

MEASURES AGAINST FAMINE AND ECONOMIC RUIN

5) The Soviet government must immediately introduce throughout the state workers' control over production and consumption. As has been shown by the experience of May 19 (6), failing such

control all promises of reform and all attempts at reform are futile, and famine and catastrophe of unprecedented dimensions threaten the country from week to week.

The immediate nationalisation of the banks and the insurance business is essential, as well as of the more important branches of industry (oil, coal, metal, sugar, etc.). This must be accompanied by the abolition of commercial secrets and the establishment of unrelaxing vigilance by the workers and peasants over that insignificant minority, the capitalists, who wax rich on government contracts and who evade furnishing returns of and paying fair taxes on their profits and properties.

These measures, which will not deprive the middle peasants, or the Cossacks, or the small artisans, of a single kopek of their property, are absolutely fair from the point of view of the equitable distribution of the burden of the war and are absolutely urgent as measures against famine. Only by curbing the marauding tendencies of the capitalists and by putting a stop to their deliberate interruption of production will it be possible to increase the productivity of labour, establish universal labour service, regulate the exchange of grain for industrial products, and secure the return to the treasury of many billions of paper money now hoarded by the wealthy.

Unless these measures are taken, the abolition of private property in the landed estates without compensation will also be impossible, for the landed estates are for the most part mortgaged to the banks, and the interests of the landlords and capitalists are inseparably interwoven.

The recent resolution of the Economic Section of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies (*Rabochaya Gazeta*, No. 152) records not only the "balefulness" of the government's measures (such as the raising of the price of grain with the purpose of enriching the landlords and kulaks), not only "the fact of the *complete passivity* of the central bodies created by the government for the regulation of economic life," but also the "*violation of the law*" by that gov-

ernment. Such an admission on the part of the ruling parties, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, is one more proof of the criminal nature of the policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie.

MEASURES AGAINST THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION OF THE LANDLORDS AND CAPITALISTS

6) The uprising of Kornilov and Kaledin was supported by the entire landlord and capitalist class, headed by the party of the Cadets (the "People's Freedom" Party). This has been fully proved by the facts published in the *Izvestiya* of the Central Executive Committee.

But nothing has been done to completely suppress this counter-revolution, or even to investigate it, and, indeed, nothing of any value can be done unless the power passes to the Soviets. No commission is capable of instituting a full investigation, of arresting the guilty, etc., unless it is endowed with government powers. This can and must be undertaken by a Soviet government alone. Only such a government, by arresting the Kornilovist generals and the leaders of the bourgeois counter-revolution (Guchkov, Milyukov, Ryabushinsky, Maklakov, etc.), by disbanding the counter-revolutionary organisations (the State Duma, the officers' leagues, etc.), by placing their members under the surveillance of the local Soviets, and by disbanding the counter-revolutionary regiments, can make Russia secure against an inevitable repetition of "Kornilov" attempts.

Such a government alone can set up a commission for the purpose of a complete and public investigation of the Kornilovist case, as well as of all other cases, even those against which action has already been started by the bourgeoisie; and only to such a commission would the Party of the Bolsheviks, in its turn, call upon the workers to give full obedience and co-operation.

Only a Soviet government can successfully combat such a flagrant injustice as the seizure by the capitalists, with the aid of the millions filched from the people, of the largest printing plants and

the majority of the papers. The bourgeois counter-revolutionary papers (*Rech*, *Russkoye Slovo*, etc.) must be suppressed and their printing plants confiscated, private advertisements in the papers must be declared a state monopoly and transferred to the government paper published by the Soviets, which tells the peasants the truth. Only in this way can, and must, this powerful medium of unpunished lies and slander, serving to deceive the people, mislead the peasantry, and prepare for counter-revolution, be wrested from the hands of the bourgeoisie.

PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT OF THE REVOLUTION

7) The democracy of Russia, the Soviets and the Socialist-Revolutionary and the Menshevik parties, are now confronted with the opportunity, very seldom to be met with in the history of revolution, of securing the convocation of the Constituent Assembly at the appointed date without further delay, of saving the country from military and economic catastrophe, and of securing a peaceful development of the revolution.

If the Soviets now take the full and exclusive power of the state into their own hands, with the purpose of carrying out the programme set forth above, they will not only be guaranteed the support of nine-tenths of the population of Russia—the working class and the vast majority of the peasantry—but will also be guaranteed the great revolutionary enthusiasm of the army and the majority of the people, without which victory over famine and war is impossible.

There could be no question of resistance being offered to the Soviets now if they did not themselves vacillate. No class would dare to raise a rebellion against the Soviets, and the landlords and capitalists, chastened by the experience of the Kornilov affair, would peacefully surrender their power upon the ultimatum of the Soviets. In order to overcome the resistance of the capitalists to the programme of the Soviets, it would be sufficient to establish supervision by the workers and peasants over the exploiters and to punish recalcitrants by such measures as the confiscation of their entire property, coupled with a short term of imprisonment.

By seizing power now—and this is probably their last chance—the Soviets could still secure a peaceful development of the revolution, the peaceful election of deputies by the people, the peaceful struggle of parties within the Soviets, the testing of the programmes of the various parties in practice, and the peaceful transfer of power from party to party.

If this opportunity is allowed to pass, the entire course of development of the revolution, from the movement of May 3 (April 20) to the Kornilov affair, points to the inevitability of a bitter civil war between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Inevitable catastrophe will bring this war nearer. To judge by all the signs and considerations comprehensible to the human mind, this war is bound to terminate in the complete victory of the working class and its support by the poor peasantry in carrying out the programme set forth above. The war may prove arduous and bloody and cost the lives of tens of thousands of landlords and capitalists, and of army officers who sympathise with them. The proletariat will stop at no sacrifice in order to save the revolution, which is impossible apart from the programme set forth above. On the other hand, the proletariat would support the Soviets in every way if they were to avail themselves of their last chance of securing a peaceful development of the revolution.

October 9-10 (September 26-27), 1917

CAN THE BOLSHEVIKS RETAIN STATE POWER?

ON what are all currents agreed, from *Rech* to *Novaya Zhizn*, from the Cadet-Kornilovists to the semi-Bolsheviks, *everybody* except the Bolsheviks?

They are all agreed that the Bolsheviks will either never dare to take over the entire power of the state alone, or, if they do dare, that they will not be able to retain it even for the shortest space of time.

In case it is asserted that the assumption of the entire power of the state by the Bolsheviks alone is a question that has not the slightest political actuality, and that only the gross conceit of a "fanatic" could regard it as being actual, we shall refute such an assertion by quoting the exact declarations of very responsible and influential political parties and tendencies of various "hues."

But first a word or two regarding the first of the questions mentioned: Will the Bolsheviks dare alone to take over the entire power of the state? I have already had occasion to reply to this question by a categorical affirmative at the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, in a remark I felt compelled to shout from my seat during one of Tseretelli's ministerial speeches. Nor have I met with any declaration by the Bolsheviks, either printed or oral, to the effect that we should not assume power alone. I continue to maintain that any political party generally, and the party of the advanced class in particular, would forfeit its right to exist, would be unworthy of being regarded as a party, would be a wretched cipher in all respects, were it to refuse to assume power when it had the opportunity to do so.

Let us now proceed to quote statements of Cadets, Socialist-Revolutionaries and semi-Bolsheviks (I would rather say quarter-Bolsheviks) on the question under discussion.

The following is from an editorial in *Rech* of September 29 (16):

"... Discord and confusion reigned in the hall of the Alexandrinsky Theatre;¹ and the Socialist press reflects the same picture. The views of the Bolsheviks alone are distinguished by definiteness and directness. At the Conference these are the views of the minority. In the Soviets they represent a current which is steadily gaining in strength. But in spite of their truculent rhetoric, their boastful phrases and their demonstrative self-confidence, the Bolsheviks, with the exception of a few fanatics, are brave only in words. They would not attempt to take over the 'entire power' of their own accord. Disorganisers and disrupters *par excellence*, they are essentially cowards; in their heart of hearts they fully realise their own ignorance and the ephemeral nature of their present successes. They know as well as we do that the first day of their final triumph would also be the first day of their headlong fall. Irresponsible by their very nature, anarchists in method and practice, they are conceivable only as one of the currents of political thought, or, more correctly, as one of its aberrations. The best way to get rid of Bolshevism for many years, to eliminate it, would be to entrust its leaders with the fate of the country. And were it not for the consciousness of the inadmissible and disastrous nature of such experiments, one might, in desperation, decide even upon such a heroic measure. Happily, we repeat, these wretched heroes of the day are themselves not really anxious to seize the entire power. Under no circumstances are they capable of constructive work. Thus all their definiteness and directness are limited to the political platform, to meeting-oratory. For all practical purposes, their position cannot be taken seriously from any point of view. However, in one respect it has a certain practical consequence: it unites all other shades of 'Socialist thought' in disfavouring it. . . ."

This is how the Cadets argue. And here is the point of view of the largest, the "ruling and governing" party in Russia, the "Socialist-Revolutionaries," as expressed in an also unsigned, and therefore editorial, article in their official organ, *Dyelo Naroda*, of October 4 (September 21):

"... Should the bourgeoisie, pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, be unwilling to work together with the democracy on the basis of the platform adopted by the Conference, then *the coalition must arise from within the Conference itself*. That would be a great sacrifice on the part of the supporters of a coalition, *but even the propagandists of a 'clear line' of power must agree to this*. We are afraid, however, that no agreement may be reached. In that case a third and last combination remains, namely, that the section of the Conference that stood on *principle* for homogeneity of government, must organise the government.

"We will put it bluntly: *The Bolsheviks will be obliged to form a cabinet.*

¹ I.e., during the Democratic Conference, which met in the Alexandrinsky Theatre in Petrograd in September 1917.—Ed.

They displayed the greatest energy in inculcating a hatred of coalition into the revolutionary democracy, promising every benefit as soon as 'compromise' was abandoned, and attributing to the latter all the misfortunes of the country.

"If in in their agitational work *they really meant what they said*, if they *were not deceiving the masses*, they are in duty bound to pay the promissory notes they have handed out right and left.

"The question is clear.

"Let them not make futile attempts to take refuge in hastily concocted theories as to the impossibility of their assuming power.

"The democracy will accept no such theories.

"At the same time, the advocates of coalition must guarantee them full support. Such are the three combinations, the three ways open to us—there are no others." (The italics are by *Dyelo Naroda*.)

Thus argue the Socialist-Revolutionaries. And here, finally, is the position—if an attempt to sit between two stools can be called a position—of the *Novaya Zhizn*-ist quarter-Bolsheviks, as expressed in an editorial in *Novaya Zhizn* of October 6 (September 23):

"... Should a Coalition with Konovalov and Kishkin again take shape, it will simply involve a new capitulation on the part of the democracy and the rejection of the resolution of the Conference regarding the formation of a responsible government on the basis of the platform of August 27 (14).**

"A homogeneous ministry of Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries will feel its responsibility as little as it was felt by the responsible Socialist ministers in the Coalition Cabinet. ... Such a government would not only be incapable of rallying to itself the 'virile forces' of the revolution, but could not even count on any active support from its vanguard, the proletariat.

"However, the formation of another type of homogeneous cabinet, a government of the 'proletariat and the poor peasantry,' would be not a better, but a much worse escape from the situation—in fact, it would not be an escape at all; it would be a simple failure. Such a slogan, it is true, is not being advanced by anyone except in occasional, timid, and subsequently systematically 'explained-away' remarks of *Rabochy Put*. [This glaring untruth is "boldly" written by responsible publicists, who have even forgotten the editorial of *Dyelo Naroda* of October 4.]

"Formally, the Bolsheviks have now revived the slogan, 'All Power to the Soviets.' This slogan was dropped when, after the July days, the Soviets through the Central Executive Committee definitely began to pursue an active anti-Bolshevik policy. Now, however, not only may the 'Soviet line' be considered straightened out, but there is every reason to assume that the proposed Congress of Soviets will yield a Bolshevik majority. Under such circumstances, the slogan, 'All Power to the Soviets,' revived by the Bolsheviks, is a 'tactical line' aiming at the dictatorship of the proletariat and the 'poor peasantry.' True, by Soviets are also implied the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, and thus the Bolshevik slogan implies a power resting on the overwhelming

majority of the whole democracy of Russia. But in that case the slogan, 'All Power to the Soviets,' loses all independent significance, since the Soviets are thus made almost identical in their composition with the 'Pre-parliament' set up by the Conference. . . ."

(This assertion of *Novaya Zhizn* is a shameless lie, and is equivalent to declaring that spurious and sham democracy is "almost identical" with democracy. The Pre-parliament is a *fraud*, which pretends that the will of a minority of the people—particularly of Kuskova, Berkenheim, Chaikovsky and Co.—is the will of the majority. That, in the first place. In the second place, even the Peasants' Soviets, faked by the Avksentyevs and Chaikovskys, sent to the Conference such a high percentage of opponents to the coalition that they, together with the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, would *inevitably* have brought about the *collapse of the coalition*. And, in the third place, "Power to the Soviets" means that the power of the Peasants' Soviets would principally embrace the villages, and in the villages the predominance of the *poor* peasantry is assured. . . .)

"If it is one and the same thing, then the Bolshevik slogan must be immediately withdrawn. If, however, 'Power to the Soviets' is only a disguise for the dictatorship of the proletariat, then such a power would imply the collapse and failure of the revolution.

"Is it necessary to prove that the proletariat, isolated not only from the other classes of the country, but also from the really virile forces of democracy, will be unable either technically to take control of the state apparatus and to wield it under the exceptionally complicated existing circumstances, or politically to resist the pressure of hostile forces, which will sweep away not only the dictatorship of the proletariat, but the whole revolution as well?

"The only power answering the requirements of the moment would be a truly honest coalition within the democracy itself. . . ."

* * *

We apologise to the reader for the long quotations, but they were absolutely necessary. One had to give an exact idea of the position of the various parties hostile to the Bolsheviks. One had definitely to prove the highly important circumstance that *all* these parties have admitted that the question of the assumption of the entire power of the state by the Bolsheviks alone is not only feasible but is an actual question, a burning question.

Let us now examine the grounds on which "everybody," from

the Cadets to the *Novaya Zhizn*-ists, is convinced that the Bolsheviks will not be able to retain power.

The sedate *Rech* offers no arguments at all. It merely pours upon the Bolsheviks streams of the choicest and most irate abuse. The quotation cited by us incidentally shows how wrong it would be to think that *Rech* is "provoking" the Bolsheviks to assume power and that, therefore, "Beware, comrades, what the enemy advises must certainly be bad!" If, instead of realistically weighing the general and particular *pros* and *cons*, we allow ourselves to be "persuaded" that the bourgeoisie is "provoking" us to take power, we shall find that we have been fooled by the bourgeoisie. For there is not the slightest doubt that the bourgeoisie, in its malice, will always prophesy a million misfortunes that will follow the assumption of power by the Bolsheviks; it will always cry in fury: "Better get rid of the Bolsheviks at once and for 'many years' to come by allowing them to take power and then routing them." If you like, such cries are also "provocation," only from an opposite angle. The Cadets and the bourgeoisie do not "advise" and have never "advised" us to take power; they are only trying to *frighten* us by what they call unsolvable problems of government.

No, we must not allow ourselves to be scared by the outcries of the scared bourgeoisie. We must remember that we have never set ourselves the aim of solving "unsolvable" social problems; and as for the *perfectly* solvable problems of the immediate steps towards socialism, as the only escape from an extremely difficult situation, they can be *solved only* by a dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasantry. More than at any other time, more than anywhere else, the proletariat in Russia, if it now seizes power, can be certain of victory, and of a lasting victory.

Let us discuss in a purely businesslike manner the *concrete* circumstances which render this or that particular moment unfavourable, but let us not allow ourselves to be scared for a moment by the wild cries of the bourgeoisie, and let us not forget that the assumption of the entire power by the Bolsheviks is becoming a truly *urgent* question. The danger to our Party will be immeasurably greater if we forget this than if we concede that the assumption of power is "premature." "Premature" it *cannot* be now; the

chances are a million to one, or perhaps a million to two, that it will not be.

As to the irate abuse of *Rech*, we might say:

*We hear the voice of approbation
Not in the dulcet sounds of praise,
But in the roar of irritation!*¹

The fact that the bourgeoisie detests us so savagely is a convincing proof that we are showing the people the *right* way and the *right* means to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie.

* * *

On this occasion *Dyelo Naroda*, by way of a rare exception, did not think fit to honour us with its abuse, but neither did it advance a shadow of argument. It only endeavoured indirectly, in the form of a hint, to *scare* us by the prospect that "the Bolsheviks will be obliged to form a cabinet." I am fully ready to admit that, in trying to scare us, the Socialist-Revolutionaries are sincerely scared themselves—scared to death by the phantom conjured up by a scared liberal mind. I can equally admit that in certain very august, and very rotten, institutions, such as the Central Executive Committee, and similar "contact" commissions (i.e., that maintain contact with the Cadets, or, more bluntly, hobnob with the Cadets), the Socialist-Revolutionaries do succeed in frightening some of the Bolsheviks. For, first, the atmosphere in these Central Executive Committees, Pre-parliaments, and the like, is abominable, putrid to the point of nausea, and to breathe it for any length of time is injurious to *any man*;² and, secondly, sincerity is contagious, and a sincerely scared philistine is capable of temporarily transforming even a revolutionary into a philistine.

But however understandable, "humanly" speaking, may be the sincere fright of a Socialist-Revolutionary who has the misfortune to be a minister in a government with the Cadets, or to be eligible for a ministerial position in the eyes of the Cadets, for us to allow ourselves to be scared would be a political error which may easily border on treachery to the proletariat. Let us have businesslike

¹ From Nekrasov's poem, "The Death of Gogol."—Ed.

arguments, gentlemen! And do not hope that we shall allow ourselves to be scared by your own fright!

* * *

Business-like arguments are to be found this time only in *Novaya Zhizn*. On this occasion it appears as the advocate of the bourgeoisie, a role that suits it much better than the role of defender of the Bolsheviks, which obviously shocks this "amiable lady."

This advocate advances six arguments:

- 1) The proletariat is "isolated from the other classes of the country."
- 2) It is "isolated from the really virile forces of democracy."
- 3) It "will be unable technically to take control of the state apparatus."
- 4) It "will be unable to wield this apparatus."
- 5) "The circumstances are exceptionally complicated."
- 6) It "will be unable to resist the pressure of hostile forces, which will sweep away not only the dictatorship of the proletariat, but the whole revolution as well."

The first argument is formulated by *Novaya Zhizn* so clumsily as to be positively ridiculous, for we know but three classes in capitalist and semi-capitalist society: the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie (with the peasantry as its chief representative), and the proletariat. What, then, is the sense of saying that the proletariat is isolated from the other classes, when the issue is a struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, of a revolution against the bourgeoisie?

Novaya Zhizn must have meant that the proletariat is isolated from the peasantry, for surely it could not have meant the landlords. But it dared not say definitely and clearly that the proletariat is now isolated from the peasantry, for the glaring untruth of such a statement would be only too evident.

It is difficult to conceive that in a capitalist country the proletariat could be so little isolated from the petty bourgeoisie—and, mind you, in a revolution *against the bourgeoisie*—as the proletariat now is in Russia. As objective and indisputable proof, we

have the figures of the voting *for* and *against* a coalition with the bourgeoisie of the various "*curiæ*" of Tseretelli's "Bulygin Duma," *i.e.*, the notorious "Democratic" Conference.

Taking the Soviet *curiæ*, we find:

	<i>For coalition</i>	<i>Against coalition</i>
Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies	83	192
Soviets of Peasants' Deputies	102	70
All Soviets	185	262

Thus, the majority is on the side of the proletarian slogan "We are opposed to a coalition with the bourgeoisie." As we saw above, even the Cadets are forced to admit the growing influence of the Bolsheviks in the Soviets. And here we have a Conference summoned by the *recent* leaders in the Soviets, by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, who have an assured majority in the central institutions! It is clear that the *actual* superiority of the Bolsheviks in the Soviets is here *minimised*.

Both on the question of a coalition with the bourgeoisie and on the question of the immediate handing over of the landed estates to the peasant committees, the Bolsheviks already have a *majority* in the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies—a *majority of the people*, a majority of the petty bourgeoisie. *Rabochy Put* of No. 19, October 7 (September 24), cites from No. 25 of the organ of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, *Znamya Truda*, an account of a conference of local Soviets of Peasants' Deputies held in Petrograd on October 1 (September 18). At this conference, the Executive Committees of four Peasants' Soviets (of the Kostroma, Moscow, Samara and Taurida gubernias ¹) expressed themselves in favour of an unrestricted coalition. The Executive Committees of *three* gubernias (the Vladimir, Ryazan and the Black Sea gubernias) and *two* armies were in favour of coalition without the Cadets. The Executive Committees of *twenty-three* gubernias and *four* armies declared themselves against coalition.

Thus, the majority of the peasants are against coalition!

So much for the "isolation of the proletariat."

It should be noted, by the way, that in favour of coalition

¹ *Gubernia*—a province.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

were three outlying gubernias, Samara, Taurida and Black Sea, where there are a comparatively large number of rich peasants and big landlords employing hired labour, and also four industrial gubernias (Vladimir, Ryazan, Kostroma and Moscow), where the peasant bourgeoisie is also stronger than in the majority of the Russian gubernias. It would be interesting to gather more detailed figures on this subject and to ascertain whether information is not available regarding the *poor* peasants in the gubernias containing the "richest" peasantry.

Further, it is interesting to note that the "national groups" revealed a considerable predominance of opponents of coalition, namely, forty votes as against fifteen. The annexationist and harshly oppressive policy of the Bonapartist Kerensky and Co. towards the non-sovereign nations of Russia has borne fruit. The broad mass of the population of the oppressed nations, i.e., the mass of their petty bourgeoisie, trust the proletariat of Russia more than they do the bourgeoisie, for history has placed on the order of the day the struggle for emancipation of the oppressed nations against their oppressors. The bourgeoisie has basely betrayed the cause of freedom of the oppressed nations; the proletariat has remained loyal to the cause of freedom.

The national and agrarian questions are questions of fundamental importance for the petty-bourgeois masses of the population of Russia at the present time. That is indisputable. And with regard to both these questions the proletariat is a long way from being "isolated." It has the majority of the people behind it. It *alone* is capable of pursuing a bold and truly "revolutionary-democratic" policy on both these questions, such as would immediately assure a proletarian government not only the support of the majority of the population, but also a veritable outburst of revolutionary enthusiasm on the part of the masses. For at the hands of that government the masses would for the first time meet not with the ruthless oppression of the peasants by the landlords, of the Ukrainians by the Great-Russians, as was the case under tsarism; they would meet not with an attempt, camouflaged by fine phrases, to pursue a similar policy under the republic; they would meet not with blame, insult, chicanery, procrastination, shabby treatment and

evasion (with all of which Kerensky rewards the peasants and the oppressed nations), but with warm sympathy, demonstrated in practice, by immediate and revolutionary measures directed against the landlords, and by the immediate restoration of *full* freedom for Finland, the Ukraine, White Russia, the Moslems, etc.

The Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik gentlemen know this very well, and that is why they drag in the semi-Cadet leaders of the co-operatives to assist them in their *reactionary*-democratic policy directed *against* the masses. That is why they will never dare to consult the opinion of the masses, to institute a referendum, or even take a vote of all the local Soviets and of all local organisations on definite points of practical policy, for instance, whether the landed estates should be handed over immediately to the peasant committees, whether such-and-such demands of the Finns and the Ukrainians should be conceded, and so forth.

Now as to the question of peace, that cardinal question of today. The proletariat is "isolated from the other classes. . . ." The truth is, the proletariat here comes forth as the representative of the *whole* nation, of all that is virile and honest in *all* classes, of the vast majority of the petty bourgeoisie; for only the proletariat, having attained power, will *at once* propose a just peace to all belligerent nations; only the proletariat will undertake truly *revolutionary* measures (the publication of the secret treaties, etc.) in order to secure at the earliest possible date as just a peace as possible.

No, when the gentlemen of *Novaya Zhizn* howl that the proletariat is isolated they are only expressing the subjective fear induced in them by the bourgeoisie. In the objective state of affairs in Russia at the present time the proletariat is most certainly *not* "isolated" from the majority of the petty bourgeoisie. Now, after the unhappy experience of the "coalition," the proletariat has the sympathy of the *majority* of the people on its side. *This* condition for the retention of power by the Bolsheviks *does* exist.

* * *

The second argument consists in the assertion that the proletariat is "isolated from the really virile forces of democracy." What

this means it is impossible to understand. It is probably "Greek," as the French say in such cases.

The writers of *Novaya Zhizn* would make eligible ministers. They are eminently suited to serve as ministers under the Cadets. For what is required of such ministers is the ability to utter fine-sounding, polished phrases which have absolutely no meaning, but which can cover any dirty business, and which therefore are assured the plaudits of the imperialists and the social-imperialists. The *Novaya Zhizn*-ists are assured the plaudits of the Cadets, Breshkovskaya, Plekhanov and Co. for their assertion that the proletariat is isolated from the really virile forces of democracy. For indirectly that means—or will be understood to mean—that the Cadets, Breshkovskaya, Plekhanov, Kerensky and Co. are "the virile forces of democracy."

That is untrue. They are dead forces. The history of the coalition proved that.

Cowed by the bourgeoisie and their bourgeois-intellectual environment, the *Novaya Zhizn*-ists regard as "virile" the Right Wing of the Socialist-Revolutionaries are Mensheviks, who do not differ in anything essential from the Cadets, such as *Volya Naroda*, *Yedinstvo*, etc. We, on the other hand, regard as virile only those who are bound up with the masses and not with the kulaks, only those who have been led by the experience of the coalition to turn away from it. "The really virile forces" of petty-bourgeois democracy are represented by the Left-Wing Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. The increasing strength of this Left Wing, particularly after the July counter-revolution, is one of the surest objective signs that the proletariat is *not* isolated.

This became still more evident quite recently in the swing of the Socialist-Revolutionary Centre towards the Left, as is shown by Chernov's declaration of October 7 (September 24) to the effect that his group cannot support the new coalition with Kishkin and Co. This shift towards the Left of the Socialist-Revolutionary Centre, which hitherto provided the overwhelming majority of the representatives of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party—the party which, by the number of votes it obtained in the towns and, particularly, in the villages, occupies a supreme and domin-

ating position—proves that the statements quoted by us from *Dyelo Naroda* to the effect that democracy under certain circumstances must “guarantee full support” to a purely Bolshevik government at least are not empty phrases.

Such facts as the refusal of the Socialist-Revolutionary Centre to support a new coalition with Kishkin, or the predominance of the *opponents* of coalition among the *Menshevik defencists* in the provinces (Jordania in the Caucasus, and so on), are objective proof that a certain section of the *masses*, who are still following the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, *will support* a purely Bolshevik government.

The Russian proletariat is now very far from being isolated from the really *virile* forces of democracy.

* * *

The third argument: the proletariat “will be unable technically to take control of the state apparatus.” This is perhaps the most usual and most popular argument. For that reason, and for the reason that it indeed points to one of the most *serious* and *difficult* tasks that will confront the victorious proletariat, it deserves the utmost attention. There is no doubt that these tasks are very difficult ones; but if we, who call ourselves Socialists, point out this difficulty with the sole purpose of *evading* the fulfilment of these tasks, we shall simply be erasing all difference between ourselves and the servitors of the bourgeoisie. The difficulty of the tasks of the proletarian revolution should but stimulate the supporters of the proletariat to a more careful and concrete study of the methods of fulfilling those tasks.

The state apparatus means first of all the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy. By asserting that the proletariat will be unable technically to take control of this apparatus, the writers of *Novaya Zhizn* reveal their extreme ignorance and their disregard of both the facts of experience and the arguments which have long ago been adduced in Bolshevik literature.

The writers of *Novaya Zhizn* all consider themselves to be, if not Marxists, at least people acquainted with Marxism, educated Socialists. Yet Marx, on the basis of the experience of

the Paris Commune, taught us that the proletariat *cannot* simply lay hold of the ready-made state machine and wield it for its own purposes; he taught us that the proletariat must *smash* that machine and replace it by a new one (I deal with this subject in detail in a pamphlet the first part of which is now complete and will shortly appear under the title *The State and Revolution: the Marxist Doctrine of the State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution*¹). Such a new state machine was created by the Paris Commune, and of *this same type* of "state apparatus" are the Russian Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. I have been repeatedly pointing this out ever since April 17 (4), 1917; it is referred to in the resolutions of Bolshevik conferences and in Bolshevik literature. Of course, *Novaya Zhizn* could have announced its complete disagreement both with Marx and with the Bolsheviks. But for a paper that has so often and so haughtily abuses the Bolsheviks for their allegedly frivolous attitude towards difficult problems to evade this subject altogether is simply a confession of its own poverty.

The proletariat *cannot* "lay hold" of the "state apparatus" and cannot "wield it." But it can *smash* all that is oppressive, all that is routine and incurably bourgeois in the old state apparatus, and replace it by *its own* new apparatus. And that apparatus is the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

It is simply monstrous that *Novaya Zhizn* has so completely forgotten about this "state apparatus." By such theoretical arguments the writers of *Novaya Zhizn* are in fact behaving in the sphere of political theory as the Cadets are behaving in the sphere of political practice. For, indeed, if the proletariat and the revolutionary democracy *do not need* a new state apparatus, then the Soviets lose their *raison d'être*, their right to exist, and in that case the Cadet-Kornilovists are *right* in endeavouring to abolish the Soviets.

This monstrous theoretical error and political blindness on the part of *Novaya Zhizn* is all the more monstrous since even the Menshevik-Internationalists (with whom *Novaya Zhizn* formed a

¹ Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VII.—Ed.

bloc at the last elections to the City Duma in Petrograd) have on this question revealed a certain approximation to the position of the Bolsheviks. Thus, in the declaration of the Soviet majority read by Comrade Martov at the Democratic Conference we read:

"... The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies created in the first days of the revolution by the mighty impulse of the genuine creative spirit of the people form the new tissue of the revolutionary state which has replaced the threadbare tissue of the state of the old regime."

This is expressed a trifle too gaudily; in other words, pretentiousness of language serves to conceal a lack of clarity of political thought. The Soviets have *not yet* replaced the old "tissue," and that old tissue is *not* the state of the old regime, but the state *both* of tsarism *and* of the bourgeois republic. But, at any rate, Martov here stands head and shoulders above the *Novaya Zhizn*-ists.

The Soviets are a new state apparatus, which, in the first place, provides an armed force of workers and peasants; and this force is not divorced from the people, as was the old standing army, but is fused with the people in the closest possible fashion. From a military point of view, this force is incomparably more powerful than previous forces; from the point of view of the revolution it cannot be replaced by anything else. Secondly, this apparatus provides a bond with the masses, with the majority of the people, so intimate, so indissoluble, so readily controllable and renewable, that there was nothing remotely like it in the previous state apparatus. Thirdly, this apparatus, by virtue of the fact that it is elected and subject to recall at the will of the people without any bureaucratic formalities, is far more democratic than any previous apparatus. Fourthly, it provides a close contact with the most diverse occupations, thus facilitating the adoption of the most varied and most radical reforms without a bureaucracy. Fifthly, it provides a form of organisation of the vanguard, *i.e.*, of the most class conscious, most energetic and most progressive section of the oppressed classes, the workers and peasants, and thus constitutes an apparatus with the help of which the vanguard of the oppressed classes can elevate, educate and lead *the vast mass* of these classes, which hitherto have stood remote from political life and from history. Sixthly, it provides the possibility of combin-

ing the advantages of parliamentarism with the advantages of immediate and direct democracy, i.e., of uniting in the persons of the elected representatives of the people both legislative and *executive* functions. Compared with bourgeois parliamentarism, this represents an advance in the development of democracy which is of historical and world-wide significance.

Our Soviets in 1905 were, so to speak, but an embryo, for they existed for a few weeks only. Under the circumstances of the time there was obviously no possibility of their all-round development. And even now, in the revolution of 1917, that is still not the case, for a period of only a few months is very little, and, what is most important, the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders have *prostituted* the Soviets, have degraded them to the status of talk-shops, of accessories to the compromising policy of the leaders. The Soviets have been rotting and decaying under the leadership of the Liebers, Dans, Tseretellis and Chernovs. The Soviets can properly develop and expand their promise and capacity fully only provided they assume the *entire* power of the state; for otherwise *they have nothing to do*, otherwise they are simply embryos (and an embryo cannot exist very long), or mere puppets, "Dual power" is paralysing the Soviets.

If the creative impulse of the revolutionary classes of the people had not engendered the Soviets, the proletarian revolution in Russia would have been a hopeless cause. For the proletariat could certainly not have retained power with the old state apparatus, while it is impossible to create a new apparatus immediately. The sad history of the prostitution of the Soviets by Tseretelli and Chernov, the history of the "coalition," is at the same time the history of the emancipation of the Soviets from petty-bourgeois illusions, of their passage through the "purgatory" of practical acquaintance with the abomination and filth of *all* and *every* bourgeois coalition. Let us hope that this "purgatory" has not injured the Soviets, but rather tempered them.

* * *

The main difficulty of a proletarian revolution is to establish, on a nation-wide scale, a precise and scrupulous system of ac-

counting and control, *control by the workers*, over the production and distribution of commodities.

When the writers of *Novaya Zhizn* protested that our slogan of "workers' control" involves syndicalism, that protest was a specimen of a stupid, schoolboyish application of "Marxism," which, instead of being intelligently digested, is *simply learned by rote* after the Struve manner. Syndicalism either repudiates the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat or relegates it, as it does political power in general, to an utterly subordinate place. We give it prime place. If one speaks in the spirit of the *Novaya Zhizn*-ists, simply of state control, *not* of workers' control—that is a bourgeois-reformist phrase, in essence a purely Cadet formula, for the Cadets have no objection to the *participation* of the workers in "state" control. The Cadet-Kornilovists know very well that such participation offers the bourgeoisie the best method of deceiving the workers, that it is a most subtle method of *bribing*, politically speaking, people like Gvozdev, Nikitin, Prokopovich, Tseretelli and the rest of the gang.

When we say "workers' control," always *associating* that slogan with the dictatorship of the proletariat, and always putting it *after* the latter, we thereby make plain what state we have in mind. The state is the organ of domination of a *class*. Of which class? If of the bourgeoisie, then it is a Cadet-Kornilov-Kerensky state, from which the working people of Russia have now been "kornilising and kerensising" for over half a year. If of the proletariat, if it is a proletarian state we are referring to, *i.e.*, the dictatorship of the proletariat, then workers' control *can* become a national, all-embracing, omnipresent, extremely precise and extremely scrupulous *accounting* of the production and distribution of goods.

That is the main difficulty, and that is the main problem of the proletarian, *i.e.*, the socialist revolution. Without the Soviets this task, at any rate for Russia, would be impossible of solution. The Soviets indicate the organisational work of the proletariat which *can* solve this problem of world-historic significance.

This brings us to another aspect of the question of the state apparatus. Besides the pre-eminently "coercive" machinery—the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy—there

is in the modern state an apparatus that is closely connected with the banks and syndicates, an apparatus that performs a vast amount of work of an accounting and statistical nature, if one may so express it. This apparatus cannot, and should not, be broken up. It must be wrested from the control of the capitalists; the capitalists must be *cut off, lopped away, chopped off* from it, together with the threads by which they transmit their influence. It must be *subordinated* to the proletarian Soviets. It must be made wider, more comprehensive, more popular. And this *can* be done by taking advantage of the achievements already made by big capitalism (and, indeed, the proletarian revolution generally can attain its aim only by taking advantage of these achievements).

Capitalism has created an *apparatus* of registration and account in the shape of the banks, syndicates, the postal service, consumers' societies, and unions of employees. *Without big banks socialism would be impossible of realisation.*

The big banks *are* a "state apparatus" we *need* for the realisation of socialism, and which we *shall take from capitalism ready-made*. Our problem here is only to *lop away* that which *capitalistically disfigures* this otherwise excellent apparatus and to make it *still bigger*, still more democratic, still more comprehensive. Quantity is transformed into quality. A single huge state bank, with branches in every volost¹ and in every factory—that will already be nine-tenths of a *socialist* apparatus. That will be general state *bookkeeping*, general state *accounting* of the production and distribution of goods, something in the nature, so to speak, of the *skeleton* of a socialist society.

This "state apparatus" (which under capitalism is not wholly a state apparatus, but which will be wholly so with us under socialism) we can "lay hold of" and "wield" at a single stroke, by a single decree; for the actual work of bookkeeping, audit, registration, control and accounting is performed by *employees*, most of whom are themselves in the position of proletarians or semi-proletarians.

The proletarian government can, and must, by a single decree, transform these employees into state employees—in the same way

¹ *Volost*—a rural district.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

as the watchdogs of capitalism, such as Briand and other bourgeois ministers, by a single decree transform striking railwaymen into state employees. We shall need a great many more such state employees; and more *can* be made available, for capitalism has simplified the functions of accounting and audit, and has reduced them to a comparatively simple system of *entries*, within the capacity of any literate person.

The transformation of bank, syndicate, commercial and similar employees into state employees is perfectly feasible, both technically (thanks to the preliminary work accomplished for us by capitalism and finance capitalism) and politically, provided control and supervision are exercised by the *Soviets*.

As for the higher employees, of whom there are very few, and who incline towards the capitalists, we shall have to treat them as we treat the capitalists—"roughly." They, like the capitalists, will offer *resistance*, and this resistance will have to be *broken*. And if the immortally naive Peshekhonov, like the true "infant statesman" he is, lisped in June 1917 that "the resistance of the capitalists has been broken," this childish phrase, this childish swagger, this boyish sally, will be *turned by the proletariat into reality*.

This we can do, for it is merely a question of smashing the resistance of an insignificant minority of the population, literally a handful of people, over every one of whom the employees' unions, the trade unions, the consumers' societies and the Soviets will institute such *supervision* that every Tit Titych¹ will be as completely *encompassed* as the French at Sedan. We know them all by name: we have only to take the lists of directors, members of boards, big shareholders, and so forth. There are a few hundred of them in the *whole* of Russia, at most a few thousand, each of whom the proletarian state, with its Soviet apparatus, its employees' unions, and so forth, can surround with tens or hundreds of controllers, so that, most likely, instead of having to "smash their resistance," we may succeed with the help of *workers' control* (over the capitalists) in rendering such resistance *impossible*.

The vital thing will be not so much the confiscation of cap-

¹ See footnote to p. 237.--Ed.

alist property as the establishment of universal, all-embracing workers' control over the capitalists and their possible supporters. Confiscation alone will lead us nowhere, for it does not contain the element of organisation, accounting, or correct distribution. Confiscation might easily be replaced by a *fair* tax (levied, for instance, on the Shingarev scale), provided only that we make it impossible to escape rendering returns, conceal the truth, or evade the law. And *only* workers' control in a *workers' state* can eliminate this possibility.

Compulsory trustification, i.e., compulsory amalgamation into associations under the control of the state, is what capitalism has prepared the way for, and what the *Junker* state has put into effect in Germany. This will be fully realisable in Russia by the Soviets and the dictatorship of the proletariat. And this will give us a "*state apparatus*," universal, new and non-bureaucratic.¹

* * *

The fourth argument of the advocates of the bourgeoisie is that the proletariat will be unable to wield the state apparatus. This argument, in comparison with the preceding one, contains nothing new. The old apparatus, of course, we could neither get control of nor wield. The new apparatus, the Soviets, is *already* being wielded by the "mighty impulse of the genuine creative spirit of the people." This apparatus must only be freed of the *shackles* in which it was placed by the domination of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders. This apparatus is *already* being wielded; all that is needed is to rid it of the monstrous petty-bourgeois deadweight that is preventing it from advancing at full speed.

Two circumstances must here be examined to supplement what has already been said: first, the new methods of control, which were created *not* by us but by capitalism in its military-imperialist stage; secondly, the importance of a more profound democracy in the *administration* of a state of the proletarian type.

The grain monopoly and the bread ration cards were created not by us, but by the capitalist state at war. The latter has al-

¹ For more details about the meaning of compulsory trustification see my pamphlet *The Threatening Catastrophe and How to Fight It*.

ready within the framework of capitalism established universal labour service, that is, a military convict prison for workers. Here, too, as in all its historical creative work, the proletariat takes its weapons from capitalism; it does not invent them or create them out of nothing.

The grain monopoly, the bread cards and universal labour service in the hands of the proletarian state, in the hands of the sovereign Soviets, will become a powerful instrument of accounting and control, an instrument which, applied to the capitalists and *the rich in general*, and applied to them by the *workers*, will constitute a force unprecedented in history for "wielding" the state apparatus, for overcoming the resistance of the capitalists and making them obey the proletarian state. This instrument of control and of *compelling people to work* will be more effective than the laws of the Convention and its guillotine. The guillotine *only* intimidated, it only crushed *active* resistance. *For us that is not enough.*

For us that is not enough. We must not only intimidate the capitalists so that they feel the might of the proletarian state and forget to think of actively resisting it; we must crush also their *passive* resistance, which is undoubtedly much more dangerous and harmful. We must not only crush all resistance; we must *get people to work* within the new organisation of the state. It is not enough to "get rid" of the capitalists; it is necessary (after getting rid of the useless ones, the incorrigible resisters) to employ them in *the service of the new state*. This applies to the capitalists as well as to the higher bourgeois intellectuals, office workers, etc.

And we have the required means. We have received the means and weapons from the capitalist state at war—the grain monopoly, the bread cards and universal labour service. "He who toils not, neither shall he eat"—that is the basic, prime and chief rule which the Soviets of Workers' Deputies can and will introduce as soon as they become the governing power.

Every worker has a work book. This document does not humiliate him, although *at the present time* it is undoubtedly a document of capitalist wage slavery, a certificate of the fact that the working man belongs to some parasite or other.

The Soviets will institute the work book *for the rich*, and *then* gradually extend it to the whole population (in a peasant country, the work book will probably for a long time to come be unnecessary for the overwhelming majority of the peasants). The work book will cease to be the insignia of the "rabble," it will cease to be a document of the "lower" orders, a certificate of wage slavery. It will be converted into a document testifying that in the new society there are no longer any "workers," but that, on the other hand, there is nobody *who does not work*.

The rich will be obliged to procure a work book from the union of workers or employees to which their particular sphere of activity is most akin. Every week, or at some other stated interval, they will have to obtain a certificate from that union to the effect that they are performing their work conscientiously; otherwise they will not be able to obtain their bread card or food products generally. We need good organisers in banking and in amalgamating enterprises (in these matters the capitalists have had more experience, and work goes more smoothly with experienced people); we need more engineers, agronomists, technicians, scientifically trained experts of every kind, than ever before. We shall entrust all such workers with tasks to which they are accustomed and with which they can cope. We shall probably only gradually introduce equality of pay for all work in its full extent, leaving a higher rate of pay for such experts during the transition period. But we shall put them under comprehensive workers' control; we shall insist on the full and unconditional observance of the rule: "He who toils not, neither shall he eat." As for the organisational form of the work, we shall not invent it, but shall take ready-made from capitalism the banks, syndicates, the best factories, experimental stations, academies, etc.; we shall only need to select the best models furnished by the experience of the most advanced countries.

And, of course, we are not guilty of one atom of utopianism, we are not departing from sober common sense, when we declare that the capitalist class will offer the most stubborn resistance, but that by organising the whole population into Soviets we shall

smash that resistance. And while the particularly obstinate and recalcitrant capitalists will of course have to be punished by the confiscation of their property and by imprisonment, the victory of the proletariat will *increase* the number of cases like the one of which I read, for instance, in today's *Izvestiya*:

"On October 9 (September 26) two engineers presented themselves to the Central Council of Factory and Workshop Committees and declared that a group of engineers had decided to form a union of Socialist engineers. Considering that the present moment is in fact the beginning of the social revolution, the union places itself at the disposal of the working masses, and in defence of the interests of the workers desires to act in complete harmony with the workers' organisations. The representatives of the Central Council of Factory and Workshop Committees replied that the Council will gladly form within its organisation an engineering section which will embody in its programme the fundamental theses of the First Conference of Factory and Workshop Committees regarding workers' control over production. A joint meeting of delegates of the Central Council of Factory and Workshop Committees and the inaugural group of Socialist engineers will be held at an early date." (*Izvestiya*, October 10 [September 27], 1917.)

The proletariat, we are told, will be unable to wield the state apparatus.

Russia after the 1905 Revolution was ruled by 130,000 landlords. They ruled by the aid of unremitting violence perpetrated on 150,000,000 people, by subjecting them to endless humiliation, and by condemning the vast majority to inhuman toil and to semi-starvation.

And yet we are told that Russia cannot be governed by the 240,000 members of the Bolshevik Party, governing in the interests of the poor and against the rich. These 240,000 already have the support of not less than 1,000,000 votes of the adult population, for that is the proportion between the number of members of the Party and the number of votes cast for it, as established both by the experience of Europe and by the experience of Russia, as, for instance, in the August elections to the Petrograd Duma. And here we already have a "state apparatus" of *one million* persons, devoted to the socialist state not for the sake of a fat sum every twentieth of the month, but for the sake of an ideal.

Moreover, we have a magic means of increasing our state apparatus *tenfold* at one stroke, such as no capitalist state possessed or

could ever hope to possess. This magic means is to get the toilers, the poor, to share in the day-to-day work of governing the state.

In order to make it clear how simple it will be to apply this magic means, and how unerring its action will be, let us take as plain and obvious an example as possible.

The state has forcibly to evict a family from a house and to install another. That is done time and again by the capitalist state, and it will also be done by our state, the proletarian or socialist state.

The capitalist state evicts a workers' family which has lost its breadwinner and is unable to pay rent. A bailiff appears with a whole squad of police or "militia." In a working class district a whole detachment of Cossacks is necessary in order to effect an eviction. Why? Because the bailiff and "militiaman" refuse to go without strong military protection. They know that the sight of an eviction arouses such fury in the neighbourhood, among thousands of people who have been driven to the verge of desperation, arouses such hatred towards the capitalists and the capitalist state, that the bailiff and the squad of militiamen might at any moment be torn to pieces. Large military forces are required; several regiments of soldiers have to be brought into the town from some distant province, in order that the soldiers may be indifferent to the life of the poor of the town and may not become "infected" by socialism.

The proletarian state finds it necessary forcibly to install some needy family in the dwelling of a rich man. Our detachment of workers' militia consists, let us say, of fifteen people—two sailors, two soldiers, two class conscious workers (of whom only one, let us assume, is a member of our Party or a sympathiser), one intellectual, and eight members of the toiling poor; at least five must necessarily be women, domestic servants, unskilled workers, and so on. The detachment comes to the rich man's apartment, inspects it, and finds that there are five rooms occupied by two men and two women. "This winter, citizens, you must confine yourselves to two rooms and place two rooms at the disposal of two families that are now living in cellars. For the time being, until with the help of engineers (you are an engineer, I think?) we build good dwellings

for all, you will have to put yourselves to inconvenience. Your telephone will serve ten families. That will save about a hundred hours' work in running to the stores, and so forth. Moreover, in your family there are two unengaged semi-ablebodied workers capable of performing light service—a woman citizen of fifty-five and a citizen of fourteen. They will do duty for three hours daily in superintending the distribution of products for the ten families and in keeping the necessary accounts. The student citizen in our detachment will write out two copies of the text of this state order and you will be kind enough to give us a signed declaration that you undertake to abide by it faithfully."

Such clear examples, in my opinion, give an idea of the difference between the old bourgeois and the new socialist state apparatus and state administration.

We are not utopians. We know that not every labourer or cook could at present undertake the administration of the state. In this we agree with the Cadets, and with Breshkovskaya and Tseretelli. But we differ from these citizens in that we demand the immediate abandonment of the prejudice that assumes that only the rich, or officials picked from rich families, are capable of *governing* the state, of performing the daily routine work of administration. We demand that the class conscious workers and soldiers should conduct the *training* in the business of state administration, and that this should be begun immediately, i.e., that all the toilers, all the poor should *begin* to be trained to this business immediately.

We know that the Cadets are also willing to teach the people democracy. Cadet ladies are willing to give lectures to domestic servants on women's rights, in accordance with the best French and English authorities. Also, at the very next concert-meeting, before an audience of thousands, a general exchange of kisses will be arranged on the platform: the Cadet lady lecturer will kiss Breshkovskaya, Breshkovskaya will kiss ex-Minister Tseretelli, and a grateful people will thus obtain an object lesson in republican equality, liberty and fraternity. . . .

Yes, we agree that the Cadets, Breshkovskaya and Tseretelli are in their way devoted to the cause of democracy, and are carrying

on propaganda for it among the people. But what is to be done if our idea of democracy is somewhat different from theirs?

In our opinion, in order to mitigate the untold burdens and miseries of the war, in order to heal the terrible wounds inflicted on the people by the war, *revolutionary* democracy is necessary, *revolutionary* measures are needed, of the kind described in the example of the allocation of dwellings in the interests of the poor. We must proceed *in exactly the same way*, in both town and country, with regard to foodstuffs, clothes, boots, and so forth, and in the country with regard to the land, etc. For the administration of the state in *this* spirit we can *immediately set up a state apparatus* of about ten million, if not twenty million people—an apparatus unknown to any capitalist country. We alone can create such an apparatus, for we are assured of the complete and devoted sympathy of the vast majority of the population. This apparatus we alone can create, because we have class conscious workers, disciplined by a long capitalist “apprenticeship” (not for naught did we serve apprenticeship to capitalism), workers who are *capable* of forming a workers’ militia and of *gradually* enlarging it (beginning to enlarge it immediately) into a *people’s* militia. The class conscious workers must lead, but they can draw into the work of administration the real masses of the toiling and the oppressed.

Of course, mistakes will be inevitable in the first steps taken by this new apparatus. But did the peasants make no mistakes when, emerging from serfdom into freedom, they began to manage their own affairs? Is there any other way to teach the people to manage their own affairs and to avoid mistakes than by actual practice, than by immediately proceeding to genuine popular self-government? The most important thing at present is to abandon the bourgeois-intellectual prejudice that only special officials, who by their whole social position are entirely dependent on capital, can perform the work of administration of the state. The most important thing is to put an end to the state of affairs in which the bourgeois, the officials and the “Socialist” ministers try to manage the state in the old way, and fail, so that after seven months, in a peasant country, they are faced with a peasant revolt! The most

important thing is to inspire the oppressed and the toilers with confidence in their own strength, to show them in practice that they can and must themselves undertake a *correct*, strictly orderly and organised distribution of grain, food, milk, clothing, dwellings, and so forth, *in the interests of the poor*. Without this, Russia *cannot* be saved from collapse and ruin; whereas an honest, courageous and universal move to hand over the administration to the proletarians and semi-proletarians will arouse such unprecedented revolutionary enthusiasm among the masses, will so multiply the forces of the people in combating their miseries, that much that seemed impossible to our old, narrow, bureaucratic forces will become practicable for the forces of the millions and millions of the masses when they *begin to work for themselves* and not under the whip, for the capitalist, the master, the official.

* * *

The question of the state apparatus also involves the question of centralism, which was raised so very vigorously and so very unhappily by Comrade Bazarov in No. 138 of *Novaya Zhizn*, of October 10 (September 27), in an article entitled "The Bolsheviks and the Problem of Power."

Comrade Bazarov reasons as follows: "The Soviets are not an apparatus adapted to *all* spheres of state life," for, allegedly, seven months' experience has proved, and "tens and hundreds of documents in the possession of the Economic Section of the Petrograd Executive Committee" have confirmed, that, although in many places the Soviets virtually enjoyed "sovereign power," nevertheless, "they were unable to achieve any satisfactory results in combating economic disorganisation." What is required is an apparatus "divided according to branches of production, strictly centralised within the limits of each branch, and subordinated to one general state centre." "It is not a question"—be good enough to observe—"of replacing the old apparatus, but of reforming it . . . however much the Bolsheviks may scoff at people with a plan. . . ."

These observations of Comrade Bazarov are amazing for their,

helplessness. They are an exact copy of the arguments of the bourgeoisie, a reflection of its class point of view.

And, indeed, to assert that the Soviets anywhere in Russia, or at any time, enjoyed "sovereign power" is simply absurd (if not a mere repetition of the self-interested class lie of the capitalists). Sovereign power implies power over all the land, the banks and the factories. Anybody with the least knowledge of historical experience and of the scientific facts concerning the connection between politics and economics could not have "forgotten" this "trifling" circumstance.

It is the lying trick of the bourgeoisie, while *denying* the Soviets power, while *sabotaging* every in any way serious measure of the Soviets, while retaining the government in its own hands and retaining the power over the land, the banks, and so on, to throw the blame for the economic disruption on the Soviets! That is the essence of the whole deplorable experience of the coalition.

The Soviets never possessed sovereign power, and their measures could result in nothing but palliatives and still greater confusion.

Demonstrating the need for centralism to the Bolsheviks, who are centralists by conviction, by their programme and by the whole tactics of their Party, is indeed hammering at an open door. The writers of *Novaya Zhizn* engage in such useless occupations only because they have completely failed to understand why we scoff at their "general state" point of view. And the *Novaya Zhizn*-ists fail to understand this because they recognise the doctrine of the class struggle only verbally, and not with their intelligence. While repeating by rote phrases regarding the class struggle, they are forever straying into a "supra-class point of view" that is ridiculous in theory and reactionary in practice. And this fawning on the bourgeoisie they call a "general state" plan.

The state, dear people, is a class concept. The state is an organ or machine for the exercise of force by one class against another. As long as it is a machine for the exercise of force by the bourgeoisie against the proletariat, the only slogan for the proletariat must be to *smash* that state. But when the state becomes proletarian, when it becomes a machine for the exercise of force by the prole-

tariat against the bourgeoisie, then we shall be fully and unreservedly in favour of a strong state power and centralism.

To put it more popularly, we are not scoffing at "plans," but at the fact that Bazarov and Co. fail to understand that in rejecting "workers' control," in rejecting the "dictatorship of the proletariat," they are *supporting* the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. There is no middle course; a middle course is but the futile dream of the petty-bourgeois democrat.

Not a single central body, not a single Bolshevik has ever argued against the Soviets' being *centralised*, against their being united. None of us has ever objected to organising factory and shop committees according to branch of production and to their centralisation. Bazarov is aiming *wide of the mark*.

We scoff, have scoffed, and shall continue to scoff, not at "centralism," not at "plans," but at *reformism*. For your reformism is exceedingly comical after the experience of the coalition. And when one talks "not of replacing the apparatus, but of reforming it," one is a reformist, one has become a reformist democrat instead of a revolutionary democrat. Reformism simply means working for concessions by the ruling class, and *not* its overthrow; trying to get concessions from it while allowing power to remain *in its hands*.

And that is just what has been tried by half a year of coalition.

It is that we are scoffing at. Bazarov, never having mastered the doctrine of the class struggle, allows himself to be caught by the bourgeoisie, who sing in unison: "Just so, just so—we are not opposed to reform, we are in favour of the participation of the workers in general state control; we fully agree to that." And the good Bazarov *objectively* plays the part of chorus for the capitalists.

This has always been, and always will be, the case with people who, in times of acute class struggle, endeavour to occupy a "middle" position. And it is because the writers of *Novaya Zhizn* are incapable of understanding the class struggle that their policy is such a ridiculous and eternal vacillation between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Occupy yourselves with "planning," dear citizens—that is not politics, that is not the class struggle; in that sphere you may indeed be of use to the people. You have many economists on your paper. Join forces with engineers, and so forth, who are prepared to work on the question of regulating production and distribution. Devote a page of your big "apparatus" (your paper) to a business-like investigation of exact data on the production and distribution of goods in Russia, on the banks, syndicates, etc., etc. That is where you can be of benefit to the people, where your sitting between two stools can do no great harm; such work on "plans" will earn you the gratitude and not the ridicule of the workers.

When the proletariat is victorious it will act as follows: it will set the economists, engineers, agricultural experts, etc., *under the control* of the workers' organisations, to work out a "plan," to test it, to seek means of saving labour by centralisation, and to seek for the simplest, cheapest, most convenient and universal methods of control. We shall pay economists, statisticians and technicians good money for this, but—we shall give them nothing to eat unless they perform the work conscientiously and entirely *in the interests of the toilers*.

We are in favour of centralism and of a "plan," but it must be the centralism and the plan of a *proletarian* state—it must be a proletarian regulation of production and distribution in the interests of the poor, the toilers, the exploited, *against* the interests of the exploiters. The concept "general state centre" we agree to understand as implying only that which smashes the resistance of the capitalists, which gives sovereign power to the majority of the people, *i.e.*, to the proletarians and semi-proletarians—the workers and the poor peasants.

* * *

The fifth argument is that the Bolsheviks cannot retain power because "the circumstances are exceptionally complicated."

Oh, wiseacres! They are prepared, forsooth, to reconcile themselves to the revolution, provided only the circumstances are not "exceptionally complicated."

Such revolutions never occur, and the sighs for such a revolution are but the reactionary lament of the bourgeois intellectual.

Even were a revolution to begin under circumstances that appeared not very complicated, the development of the revolution itself would *invariably* create *exceptionally* complicated circumstances. For a revolution, a genuine and profound revolution, a "people's" revolution, to use Marx's expression, is an incredibly complicated and painful process in which the old social order dies away and a new social order, a new order of living for tens of millions of people, is born. Revolution is a most acute, savage and desperate class struggle and civil war. There has not been a single great revolution in history without a civil war; and only a "man in a muffler" can think that civil war is conceivable without "exceptionally complicated circumstances."

Had the circumstances not been exceptionally complicated, there would have been no revolution. If you are afraid of wolves, don't go into the forest.

There is nothing to discuss in this fifth argument, for it is devoid of economic or political meaning, or meaning of any kind, for that matter. It is but the lamentation of people who are distressed and frightened by the revolution. As an illustration of such lamentation, I shall take the liberty of citing two slight personal reminiscences.

I had a conversation with a wealthy engineer not long before the July days. The engineer had at one time been a revolutionary, a member of the Social-Democratic Party, and even of the Bolshevik Party, but now he was all fear and rage at the turbulent and undauntable workers. "If they were at least workers like the German!" he said (he was an educated man and had been abroad). "Of course, I understand that, generally speaking, the social revolution is inevitable. But in our country, when the standard of the workers has been so lowered by the war! . . . No, that is not revolution, it is an abyss."

He was willing to accept the social revolution if history would lead to it in as peaceful, quiet, smooth and orderly a manner as a German express glides into a station. A sedate conductor opens the carriage door and announces: "Social Revolution Station! *Alle aussteigen* (all alight here)!" In which case, what objection

could there be to passing from a position of engineer to the Tit Tityches to a position of engineer to the workers' organisations?

This man has seen strikes. He knows what a storm of passion the most ordinary strike always arouses even in the most peaceful times. He understands, of course, how many million times greater must this storm be when the class struggle has aroused the *whole* toiling population of this enormous country, when millions of people who have been tortured for centuries by the landlords and robbed and downtrodden for decades by capitalists and tsarist officials have been driven by war and exploitation almost to the point of despair. He understands all this "theoretically"; he admits all this *verbally*. But he is scared by the "exceptionally complicated circumstances."

After the July days I was obliged, as a result of the extremely solicitous attention with which I was honoured by the Kerensky government, to go into hiding. Of course, it is the workers who shelter people like us. In an outlying working class suburb of Petrograd, in a small working class house, dinner is being served. The wife places bread on the table. "Look," says the husband, "what fine bread. 'They' dare not give us bad bread now. And we had almost forgotten that good bread could be had in Petrograd."

I was amazed at this class evaluation of the July days. My mind had been revolving around the political significance of the event, weighing its importance in relation to the general course of events, analysing the situation that had given rise to this zigzag of history and the situation it would create, and debating how we must alter our slogans and Party apparatus in order to adapt them to the changed situation. As for bread, I, who had never experienced want, never gave it a thought. Bread to me seemed a matter of course, a by-product, as it were, of the work of a writer. The mind approaches the most fundamental thing of all, the class struggle for bread by a political analysis and an extraordinarily complicated and involved path.

But this representative of the oppressed class, although one of the better-paid and well-educated workers, took the bull by the horns with that astonishing simplicity and bluntness, with that

firm resolution and amazingly clear insight, which is as remote from your intellectual as the stars in the sky. The whole world is divided into two camps: "we," the toilers, and "they," the exploiters. Not the slightest embarrassment over what had happened—for him it was just one of the battles in the long struggle of labour against capital: when wood is cut, chips will fly.

"What a terrible thing, these 'exceptionally complicated circumstances' of the revolution!"—that is the way the bourgeois intellectual thinks and feels.

"We have put the screw on 'them'; 'they' dare not make trouble now. If we tighten the screw still more we shall get rid of them altogether"—that is the way the worker thinks and feels.

* * *

The sixth and last argument is that the proletariat "will be unable to resist the pressure of hostile forces which will sweep away not only the dictatorship of the proletariat, but the whole revolution as well."

Do not try to scare us, gentlemen, you will not succeed. We have seen such hostile forces and their pressure in the case of Kornilovism (from which Kerenskyism in no way differs). Everybody saw, and all the people remember, how Kornilov's forces were routed by the proletariat and the poor peasantry and how pitiful and helpless proved to be the position of the supporters of the bourgeoisie and the small number of representatives of the more well-to-do small local landlords, who are particularly hostile to the revolution. *Dyelo Naroda* of October 13 (September 30), trying to persuade the workers to "endure" Kerenskyism (i.e., Kornilovism) and Tseretelli's fake Bulygin Duma until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly (convened under the protection of "military measures" against the rebellious peasants!), reiterates this sixth argument of *Novaya Zhizn* with great gusto, and screams till it is hoarse: "The Kerensky government will never submit" (i.e., to the government of Soviets, the government of the workers and peasants, which *Dyelo Naroda*, not to be outdone by the pogromists and anti-Semites, the monarchists and Cadets, calls the

government of "Trotsky and Lenin"; such are the lengths to which the Socialist-Revolutionaries will go!).

But neither *Dyelo Naroda* nor *Novaya Zhizn* can frighten the class conscious workers. "The Kerensky government," you say, "will never submit"—that is, to put it more bluntly and clearly, it will repeat the Kornilov affair. And the gentlemen of *Dyelo Naroda* dare to call this a "civil war," to speak of it as a "terrible prospect"!

No, gentlemen, you will not deceive the workers. That will not be civil war, but a hopeless mutiny of a handful of Kornilovists. If their desire is not to submit to the people and to provoke a repetition on a larger scale of what happened to the Kornilovists at Viborg, if the Socialist-Revolutionaries *desire* this, if the member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, Kerensky, desires this, he certainly can drive the people to the point of fury. But you will not frighten the workers and soldiers this way, gentlemen.

What unutterable insolence! They fake a new Bulygin Duma, they recruit by fraud a crowd of reactionary co-operators and village kulaks to help them; to these they add the capitalists and landlords (elements possessing the so-called property qualification), and with this band of Kornilovists they want to *thwart the will of the people*, the will of the workers and peasants.

They have brought affairs in a peasant country to such a pass that a broad stream of peasant revolt is spreading everywhere! Just think of it! In a democratic republic where 80 per cent of the population are peasants, they have driven them to a peasant revolt. . . . This same *Dyelo Naroda*, Chernov's organ, the organ of the "Socialist-Revolutionaries," which on October 13 (September 30) had the insolence to advise the workers and peasants to "endure," had been obliged, in a leading article on October 12 (September 29) to admit that

"practically nothing has been done up to the present to put an end to the conditions of servitude that still prevail in the country districts of Central Russia."

This same *Dyelo Naroda*, in the same leading article of October 12 (September 29), says that "the dead hand of Stolypin is still strongly felt in the methods of the revolutionary ministers, "

In other words, to put it clearer and more simply, it calls Kerensky, Nikitin, Kishkin and Co. *Stolypinists*.

The "Stolypinists," Kerensky and Co., have driven the peasants to revolt, they are now adopting "military measures" against the peasants, and are consoling the people with the convocation of the Constituent Assembly (although Kerensky and Tseretelli have already deceived the people once by solemnly declaring, on July 21 [8], that the Constituent Assembly would be convened on September 30 [17] and then *broken their word* and, *even* against the advice of the *Menshevik Dan*, postponed the Constituent Assembly not to the end of October, as the Menshevik Central Executive Committee of that time desired, but to the end of November). The "Stolypinists," Kerensky and Co., are consoling the people with the promise of an early convocation of the Constituent Assembly, as though the people could trust those who have already played them false in like circumstances, as though the people could believe that the Constituent Assembly will be *properly* convened by a government which is applying *military measures* in remote villages, that is, openly *conniving* at arbitrary arrests of class conscious peasants and at the *falsification* of the elections.

They drive the peasants to revolt, and then have the effrontery to tell them that they must "endure," that they must wait, and that they must put their trust in a government which is pacifying the rebellious peasants by "military measures."

They drove hundreds of thousands of Russian soldiers to their doom in the offensive undertaken after July 2 (June 19); they are dragging out the war at a time when German sailors are mutinying and throwing their superiors overboard; they have brought matters to such a pass, all the time uttering fine phrases about peace, but *not proposing* a just peace to the belligerent nations. And yet they have the effrontery to tell the workers and peasants, to tell the dying soldiers to endure, to trust the government of the "Stolypinist" Kerensky, to have faith another month in the Kornilov generals—in that month they may deliver a few more tens of thousands of soldiers to the slaughter. . . . "Endure"!

Is this not shameless insolence?

No, Messieurs the Socialist-Revolutionaries and party colleagues of Kerensky—you will not deceive the soldiers!

The workers and soldiers will not endure the Kerensky government a single day, a single hour *more*, for they know that the Soviet government will *immediately* propose a just peace to all the belligerents, and will therefore *in all probability* achieve an immediate armistice and an early peace.

The soldiers of our peasant army will not endure the Kerensky government, which is pacifying the peasant revolt by *military measures*, for a single day, a single hour *more* against the will of the Soviets.

No, Messieurs the Socialist-Revolutionaries and party colleagues of Kerensky—you will not deceive the workers and peasants any longer.

* * *

As to the pressure of the hostile forces, which, according to the assurances of the mortally terrified *Novaya Zhizn*, will sweep away the dictatorship of the proletariat, we have here another monstrous logical and political error, which only people who have allowed themselves to be frightened almost out of their wits can fail to see.

You say "the pressure of hostile forces will sweep away the dictatorship of the proletariat." Very well. But you are all economists and educated people, dear fellow-citizens. You know that to compare democracy with the bourgeoisie is senseless and sheer ignorance, equivalent to comparing pounds with yards. For there is a democratic bourgeoisie and there are strata of the petty bourgeoisie which are non-democratic (capable of a Vendée).

"Hostile forces" is a mere phrase. The class concept is the bourgeoisie (supported by the landlords).

The bourgeoisie and the landlords; the proletariat; the petty bourgeoisie—small proprietors, primarily the peasants—these are the three fundamental "forces" into which Russia, like *every* capitalist country, is divided. These are the three fundamental "forces" which have long ago been demonstrated in every capitalist country (including Russia) both by scientific economic analysis and by the *political experience* of the modern history of *all* countries, by

the experience of *every* European revolution since the eighteenth century, and by the experience of the *two* Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917.

And so you hold out the threat to the proletarians that their power will be swept away by the bourgeoisie? That can be the only meaning of your threat; it has no other significance.

Very well. If it is true that the bourgeoisie can sweep away the power of the workers and poor peasants, then nothing else remains but a coalition, *i.e.*, an alliance, or understanding, between the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie. Nothing else is even thinkable!

But the coalition was tried for half a year and led to collapse, and you yourselves, dear but dense citizens of *Novaya Zhizn*, renounced coalition.

What is the result?

You have become so muddled, citizens of *Novaya Zhizn*, you have allowed yourselves to be so scared, that you are incapable even of the most simple mental process, you are unable to count up to three, let alone to five.

Either the entire power passes to the bourgeoisie—this you have long ceased advocating; and even the bourgeoisie dare not hint at it, knowing that the people have once already, on May 3-4 (April 20-21), overthrown such a power by one lift of the shoulders, and would do so now with thrice the determination and ruthlessness. Or the entire power passes to the petty bourgeoisie—in other words, to a coalition between it and the bourgeoisie, for the petty bourgeoisie *cannot*, and has no desire, to take power independently, as has been proved by the experience of all revolutions and by economic science, which explains that in a capitalist country one may support capital or one may support labour, but that one cannot adopt a middle course. This coalition in Russia tried dozens of methods in the course of half a year, and failed.

Or, finally, the entire power passes to the proletarians and the poor peasants and is turned against the bourgeoisie in order to break its resistance. This has not yet been tried, and from this you, gentlemen of *Novaya Zhizn*, are *dissuading* the people, trying to frighten them by instilling in them your own fear of the bourgeoisie.

No fourth course is thinkable.

Consequently, if *Novaya Zhizn* is afraid of the dictatorship of the proletariat and rejects it because of the possibility of a proletarian power being defeated by the bourgeoisie, it is *surreptitiously returning* to the position of *compromise* with the capitalists!!! It is clear as daylight that if one fears resistance, does not believe in the possibility of smashing that resistance, and says to the people: "Beware of the resistance of the capitalists, you cannot cope with it"—one is by *that very fact* calling again for a compromise with the capitalists.

Novaya Zhizn is helplessly and pitifully confused, as are now all the petty-bourgeois democrats, who see the collapse of the coalition, dare not defend it openly, and are at the same time protected by the bourgeoisie and fear the sovereign power of the proletariat and the poor peasantry.

* * *

How disgraceful it is to call oneself a revolutionary, to desire to be reckoned a Socialist, and yet be afraid of the resistance of the capitalists! How international Socialism, corrupted by opportunism, has fallen ideologically if such voices *can* be raised!

We have already seen, and the whole nation has seen, the strength of resistance of the capitalists. For the capitalists are more class conscious than other classes and at once realised the significance of the Soviets; they at once *bent every effort*, adopted every device, went to the length of the most atrocious lies and slanders, resorted to military plots—all in order *to destroy the Soviets*, to reduce their power to naught, to prostitute them (with the help of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks), to transform them into talkshops, and to tire out the peasants and workers by month after month of empty chatter and play at revolution.

But *we have not yet seen* the strength of resistance of the proletarians and poor peasants. For the full measure of this strength will be revealed only when the power has passed into the hands of the proletariat, when tens of millions of people who had been crushed by want and capitalist slavery will see from their own experience, will *feel*, that the power of the state has

passed into the possession of the oppressed classes, that the power of the state is helping the poor to combat the landlords and capitalists and *smashing* their resistance. *Only* then shall we be able to see what untapped forces of resistance to capitalism are latent in the people; only then will what Engels calls "latent socialism" be made apparent; only then shall we find that for every *ten thousand* open or concealed enemies of the power of the working class, who manifest themselves either by action or by passive resistance, a *million* new fighters will arise, who until then had been politically dormant, languishing in poverty and despair, having lost faith in themselves as human beings, in their right to live, in the possibility that they too might be served by the whole force of the modern centralised state and that the detachments of proletarian militia are with full confidence calling upon *them* to take part in the immediate, direct, day-to-day work of administration of the state.

The capitalists and landlords, with the gracious assistance of the Plekhanovs, Breshkovskayas, Tseretellis, Chernovs, and Co., have done *everything* to *defile* the democratic republic, to defile it by servility to wealth; they have done this to such an extent that the people are giving way to apathy and indifference. *It is all the same to them*, for a hungry man cannot distinguish between a republic and a monarchy; a freezing, shoeless, weary soldier, perishing for the interests of others, is in no condition to love a republic.

But when every labourer, every unemployed worker, every cook, every ruined peasant sees—not from the newspapers, but with his own eyes—that the proletarian government is not cringing to wealth, but is helping the poor; that this government does not hesitate to adopt revolutionary measures; that it takes surplus products from the parasites and gives them to the hungry; that it forcibly installs the homeless into the dwellings of the rich; that it forces the rich to pay for milk, but does not give them a single drop of it until the children of *all* poor families have received an adequate supply; that the land is passing into the possession of the toilers, and the factories and banks are passing under the control of the workers; that immediate and severe punishment is being

meted out to millionaires who conceal their riches—when the poor see and feel this, then no forces of the capitalists and kulaks, no forces of international finance capital; which manipulates hundreds of billions of money, will be able to defeat the people's revolution. On the contrary, the people's revolution will conquer the whole world, for in every country the socialist revolution is ripening.

Our revolution will be invincible if it is not afraid of itself and entrusts the sovereign power to the proletariat. For behind us stand the immeasurably larger, more developed and more organised forces of the world proletariat, which have been temporarily repressed by the war, but not destroyed; in fact, they have been only multiplied by the war.

* * *

To fear that the power of the Bolsheviks—i.e., the power of the proletariat, which is assured the unlimited support of the poor peasantry, will be "swept away" by the capitalists—what shortsightedness that is! What disgraceful fear of the people, what hypocrisy! Those who betray this fear belong to that "upper" (by capitalist standards, but in reality *rotten*) "society" who utter the word "justice" without themselves believing in it, by habit, as a phrase to which they attach no meaning.

Here is an example:

Mr. Peshekhonov is a well-known semi-Cadet. A more moderate Trudovik, sharing the views of the Breshkovskayas and Plekhanovs, it would be difficult to find. There was never a minister more servile to the bourgeoisie; the world has never seen a warmer partisan of "coalition," of compromise with the capitalists.

And here is the admission this gentleman was *obliged* to make in his speech at the "Democratic" (read *Bulygin*) Conference, as reported by the defencist *Izvestiya*:

"There are two programmes. One is a programme of group demands, of class and national demands. This programme is most frankly advocated by the Bolsheviks. But the other sections of democracy also do not find it easy to reject this programme. For they are the demands of the toiling masses, of the ill-treated and oppressed nationalities. It is not so easy, therefore, for the democrats to break with the Bolsheviks, to renounce these class demands,

all the more since these demands are essentially just. But this programme, for which we fought before the revolution, for the sake of which we made the revolution, and which under other circumstances we all would have supported very solidly, presents, under existing circumstances, a great danger. The danger is now all the greater since these demands have to be advanced at a moment when it is impossible for the state to comply with them. We must first defend the whole—the state; it must be saved from disaster, and there is only one way to do that, namely, to satisfy no demands, however just and cogent they may be, but, on the contrary, to impose restrictions and sacrifices which must be contributed from all quarters.” (*Izvestiya* of the Central Executive Committee, September 30 [17].)

Mr. Peshekhonov does not understand that as long as the capitalists are in power he is defending *not* the whole, but the avaricious interests of Russian and “Allied” imperialist capital. Mr. Peshekhonov does not understand that the war will cease to be an imperialist war of conquest and plunder only after a break is made with the capitalists, with *their* secret treaties, *their* annexations (*i.e.*, seizure of foreign lands) and *their* banking and financial roguery. Mr. Peshekhonov does not understand that only *then* would the war become—if the enemy were to reject a formal proposal for a just peace—a defensive and just war. Mr. Peshekhonov does not understand that the power of defence of a country that had rid itself of the yoke of capitalism, given the land to the peasants and placed the banks and factories under the control of the workers, would be *many times* greater than the power of defence of a capitalist country.

And, most important of all, Mr. Peshekhonov does not understand that when he is forced to admit the justice of Bolshevism, to admit that its demands are the demands of the “*toiling masses*,” *i.e.*, of the majority of the population, he is thereby *surrendering* his whole position, the position of the petty-bourgeois democrats.

That is where our strength lies. Our government will be invincible because even our antagonists are forced to admit that the Bolshevik programme is the programme of the “*toiling masses*” and the “*oppressed nationalities*.”

Mr. Peshekhonov, you must remember, is the political friend of the Cadets, of the people of *Yedinstvo* and *Dyelo Naroda*, of the Breshkovskayas and the Plekhanovs. He is the representative of

the kulaks and of those gentlemen whose wives and sisters would come tomorrow with their umbrellas and gouge out the eyes of dying Bolsheviks, were they to be beaten by Kornilov's soldiers or (what is exactly the same thing) by Kerensky's soldiers.

And a gentleman of this type finds himself *constrained* to admit the "justice" of the Bolshevik demands.

For him justice is but a phrase. For the masses of the semi-proletarians, however, for the majority of the petty bourgeoisie of town and country, who have been ruined, tortured and exhausted by the war, it is not a phrase, but a most urgent, burning and momentous question, a question of starvation or of a crust of bread. That is why *no* policy can be based on a "coalition," on a "compromise" between the interests of the impoverished and hungry and the interests of the exploiters. That is why the Bolshevik government is *assured* the support of the overwhelming majority of *these* masses.

Justice is an empty word, say the intellectuals and the blackguards who are inclined to declare themselves Marxists on the lofty grounds that they have "contemplated the posterior" of economic materialism.

Ideas become a power when they seize hold of the masses. And the Bolsheviks, *i.e.*, the representatives of revolutionary proletarian internationalism, have now embodied in their policy the idea which is motivating countless masses of toilers all over the world.

Justice alone, the feelings of the masses indignant at their exploitation alone, would never have led them on to the true path of socialism. But now that, thanks to capitalism, a concrete apparatus of big banks, syndicates, railways, etc. has grown up, now that the rich experience of the advanced countries has amassed a store of technical marvels, the practical application of which is being *hampered* by capitalism; now that the class conscious workers have formed a closely-knit Party of a quarter of a million members for the purpose of systematically taking this apparatus into their hands and setting it going with the aid of all the toilers and exploited—now that these conditions *exist*, no force on earth can prevent the Bolsheviks, *if they do not allow themselves to be in-*

timidated and are capable of seizing power, from retaining that power until the triumph of the world socialist revolution.

POSTSCRIPT

The foregoing lines had already been written when an editorial in *Novaya Zhizn* of October 14 (1) yielded a new pearl of stupidity, which is all the more dangerous since it is concealed under the guise of sympathy for the Bolsheviks, under cover of a sage philistine admonition to the effect that "one must not allow oneself to be provoked" (one must not allow oneself to be caught in a snare by the cry of provocation, which is intended to scare the Bolsheviks and dissuade them from taking power).

Here is the pearl in question:

"The lessons of movements such as those of July 16-18 (3-5) on the one hand, and of the Kornilov days on the other, clearly show that democracy, which has at its disposal organs enjoying great authority among the population, is invincible when it adopts defensive position in the civil war; but that it suffers defeat, by losing the intermediate and wavering elements, when it assumes the initiative of offence."

Were the Bolsheviks to allow themselves to be influenced in any shape or form by the philistine stupidity expressed in this argument, they would cause the ruin both of their Party and of the revolution.

For the author of this argument, in taking it upon himself to talk of civil war (just the sort of subject for a most amiable lady), has perverted the *lessons of history* in an incredibly comical manner.

Let us see what the representative and founder of proletarian revolutionary tactics, Karl Marx, says about the lessons of history on this question:

"Now, insurrection is an art quite as much as war or any other, and subject to certain rules of proceeding, which, when neglected, will produce the ruin of the party neglecting them. Those rules, logical deductions from the nature of the parties and the circumstances one has to deal with in such a case, are so plain and simple that the short experience of 1848 had made the Germans pretty well acquainted with them. Firstly, never play with insurrection unless you are fully prepared to face the consequences of your play. Insurrection is a calculus with very indefinite magnitudes the value of which may change every day; the forces opposed to you have all the advantage of organisation, discipline, and habitual authority [Marx is referring to the most 'difficult'

case of insurrection, *viz.*, against an old and 'firmly established' power, against an army that has not become disintegrated by the influence of the revolution and the vacillations of the government!; unless you bring strong odds against them you are defeated and ruined. Secondly, the insurrectionary career once entered upon, act with the greatest determination, and on the offensive. The defensive is the death of every armed rising; it is lost before it measures itself with its enemies. Surprise your antagonists while their forces are scattering, prepare new successes, however small, but daily; keep up the moral ascendancy which the first successful rising has given to you; rally those vacillating elements to your side which always follow the strongest impulse, and which always look out for the safer side; force your enemies to a retreat before they can collect their strength against you; in the words of Danton, the greatest master of revolutionary policy yet known, *de l'audace, de l'audace, encore de l'audace!*" (*Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution.*)

We have changed all that, the "also-Marxists" of *Novaya Zhizn* might say; instead of a triple audacity we have two qualities: "Yes, sir, two—moderation and orderliness." The experience of world history and of the great French Revolution is nothing to us. The important thing for "us" is the experience of the two movements of 1917 distorted by Molchalin spectacles.*

But let us examine that experience without these charming spectacles.

You liken July 16-18 (3-5) to a civil war because you believed Alexinsky, Pereverzev and Co. And it is characteristic of the gentlemen of *Novaya Zhizn* that they believe *such* people; but, although they have the huge apparatus of a big daily paper at their disposal, they did absolutely nothing themselves independently *to gather information* regarding July 16-18 (3-5).

But let us assume for a moment that July 16-18 (3-5) was not merely the initial stage of a civil war, deliberately confined to its initial stage by the Bolsheviks, but a real civil war.

What lesson is to be drawn in that case?

First, that the Bolsheviks did *not* take the offensive; for it is indisputable that had they taken the offensive on the night of July 16 (3), or even on July 17 (4), they would have achieved a great deal. Their defensive position was their weakness, if we are to regard the incident as a civil war (as does *Novaya Zhizn*, and not as the transformation of a spontaneous outburst into a demonstration of the type of May 3-4 [April 20-21], as the *facts* show).

And so that "lesson" contradicts the wisecracks of *Novaya Zhizn*.

Secondly, the reason why the Bolsheviks did not even set themselves the purpose of starting an insurrection on July 16-17 (3-4), and why *not a single* Bolshevik committee even considered the question, lies *outside* the scope of our dispute with *Novaya Zhizn*. For that dispute concerns the *lessons* of a "civil war," *i.e.*, of an insurrection, and not a case when the obvious lack of a majority restrains the revolutionary party even from the thought of an insurrection.

And since it is a well-known fact that the Bolsheviks secured a majority in the Soviets, both in the capitals and in the country generally (over 49 per cent of the votes in Moscow), *much later* than July 1917, it again follows that the "lessons" are far, very far, from being those that the very amiable lady, *Novaya Zhizn*, would have liked to draw.

No, no, citizens of *Novaya Zhizn*, you had better keep away from politics!

If a revolutionary party has not a majority among the front ranks of the revolutionary classes and in the country generally, there can be no question of insurrection. Furthermore, insurrection requires: 1) that the revolution shall have assumed a national scale; 2) that the old government, for instance the "coalition" government, shall have reached a stage of complete moral and political bankruptcy; 3) that all the intermediate elements, *i.e.*, those who do *not* fully support the government, although they fully supported it yesterday, shall have reached an extreme state of vacillation.

Why is it that *Novaya Zhizn*, when speaking of the "lessons" of July 16-18 (3-5), failed even to note this very important lesson? Because non-politicians, members of an intellectual circle, frightened out of their wits by the bourgeoisie, took it upon themselves to discuss a political question.

Thirdly, the facts show that it was precisely *after* July 16-17 (3-4), as a result of the fact that Messieurs the Tseretellis had *exposed* themselves by their *July* policy and that the *masses* had come to regard the Bolsheviks as *their* front-rank fighters and the

"social bloc-ists"¹ as traitors, that the *collapse* of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries began. The collapse was already fully proved *before* the Kornilov episode by the results of the elections of September 2 (August 20) in Petrograd,² in which the Bolsheviks were victorious and the "social bloc-ists" routed. (*Dyelo Naroda* not long ago tried to refute this fact by *concealing* the results obtained by *all* the parties. But that is practising deception both on oneself and on one's readers. According to figures quoted by *Dyen* of September 6 [August 24] referring only to the town, the proportion of votes cast for the Cadets increased from 22 to 23 per cent, while the absolute number of votes cast for them decreased by 40 per cent; the proportion of votes cast for the Bolsheviks increased from 20 to 33 per cent, but their absolute vote decreased only by 10 per cent; the proportion of votes cast for all the "intermediates" decreased from 58 to 44 per cent, while their absolute vote decreased by 60 per cent!)

The collapse of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks between the July days and the Kornilov days is also shown by the growth of the "Left" Wing within both these parties, which reached nearly 40 per cent. That is a "revenge" for the persecution of the Bolsheviks by the Kerenskys.

In spite of the "loss" of a few hundred members, the proletarian party *gained* enormously from the events of July 16-17 (3-4), for in those stern days the *masses* saw and realised the devotion of that party and the *treachery* of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. The "lessons," it appears, are altogether different from those drawn by *Novaya Zhizn*, viz., do not abandon the seething masses to the "Molchalins of democracy," and, if you revolt, assume the offensive while the forces of your enemy are still scattered—catch your enemy unawares.

Is that not so, Messieurs the "also-Marxists" of *Novaya Zhizn*?

Or does Marxism, in your opinion, consist *not* in making an exact calculation of the *objective* situation the basis of one's tactics, but in unreasonably and indiscriminately putting into one

¹ I.e., the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries who formed a *bloc* with the bourgeoisie.—*Ed.*

² I.e., to the City and Borough Dumas.—*Ed.*

category both "civil war" and "a Congress of Soviets together with the summoning of the Constituent Assembly"?

Surely, gentlemen, that is ridiculous—a mockery of Marxism and of logic generally!

If the *objective* state of affairs does *not* warrant forcing the class struggle to the pitch of a "civil war," why did you talk about "civil war" *in connection with* "the Congress of Soviets and the Constituent Assembly" (that is the title of the editorial in question in *Novaya Zhizn*)? If that is the case, you should have plainly told your readers, and proved to them, that the present objective situation provides *no* grounds for a civil war, and that, therefore, peaceful, constitutionally legal, judicial and parliamentary "simple" things, such as the Congress of Soviets and the Constituent Assembly, must be made the corner-stone of one's tactics. In that case one *might* share the view that such a congress and such an assembly are really capable of *deciding*.

If, however, the objective conditions of the moment harbour the inevitability, or, at least, the probability of a civil war, if you are not talking of civil war "at random," but clearly see, feel, and perceive that the conditions for civil war exist, how can you make the Congress of Soviets or the Constituent Assembly your corner-stone? That is simply a mockery of the hungry and tormented masses! What, do you think a starving man will agree to wait two months? Or that economic disruption, regarding the growth of which you yourselves write daily, will consent to wait until the Congress of Soviets or the Constituent Assembly? Or that the German offensive, in the absence of serious steps towards peace on our part (that is, in the absence of a formal proposal to all the belligerents for a just peace), will consent to wait until the Congress of Soviets or the Constituent Assembly? Or have you at your disposal facts that allow you to conclude that the history of the Russian revolution, which from March 13 (February 28) to October 13 (September 30) proceeded with extraordinary force and unprecedented rapidity, will from October 14 (1) to December 12 (November 29) assume a super-tranquil, peaceful and legally balanced pace, excluding explosions, jerks, military defeats and economic crises? Or will the army at the front, of which the

non-Bolshevik officer, Dubasov, officially declared in the name of the forces at the front that "they will not fight," will this army consent to starve and freeze calmly until the "appointed" date? Or will the peasant revolt cease to be an element of civil war, merely because you call it "anarchy" and a "pogrom," or because Kerensky sends "military" forces *against the peasants*? Or is it possible or *conceivable* that when, in a peasant country the government is *suppressing* a peasant revolt this government can work quietly, genuinely and honestly on the convocation of a Constituent Assembly?

Do not laugh at the "confusion in the Smolny Institute," gentlemen! Your own confusion is no less. Your reply to the menacing question of civil war consists of embarrassed phrases and pitiful constitutional illusions. That is why I say that if the Bolsheviks were to yield to such moods they would ruin both their Party and their revolution.

October 14 (1), 1917

A LETTER TO THE BOLSHEVIK COMRADES ATTENDING
THE REGIONAL CONGRESS OF THE SOVIETS OF
THE NORTHERN REGION

COMRADES,

Our revolution is passing through a highly critical period. This crisis coincides with the great crisis—the maturing of the world-wide socialist revolution and the struggle waged against that revolution by world imperialism. A gigantic task is being imposed upon the responsible leaders of our Party, failure to perform which will involve the danger of a total collapse of the internationalist proletarian movement. The situation is such that verily, procrastination is like unto death.

Take a glance at the international situation. The growth of a world revolution is beyond dispute. The outburst of indignation on the part of the Czech workers has been suppressed with incredible ferocity, which indicates the extreme fright the government is in. Italy too has witnessed a mass outbreak in Turin. Most important, however, is the mutiny in the German navy. One can imagine the enormous difficulties of a revolution in a country like Germany, especially under present conditions. It cannot be doubted that the mutiny in the German navy is indicative of the great crisis—the maturing of the world revolution. While our chauvinists, who are advocating the defeat of Germany, demand a revolt of the German workers immediately, we Russian revolutionary internationalists know from the experience of 1905-17 that a more impressive sign of the growth of revolution than a mutiny among the troops cannot be imagined.

Just think what our position is now in the eyes of the German revolutionaries. They can say to us: We have only Liebknecht who openly called for a revolution. His voice has been stifled in a convict prison. We have not a single newspaper which openly ex-

plains the necessity for a revolution; we have not got freedom of assembly. We have not a single Soviet of Workers' or Soldiers' Deputies. Our voice barely reaches the real, broad masses. Yet we made an attempt at revolt, although our chance was only one in a hundred. But you Russian revolutionary internationalists have behind you a half-year of freedom of agitation; you have a score of newspapers; you have a number of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies; you have gained the upper hand in the Soviets of both capitals; you have on your side the entire Baltic Fleet and all the Russian troops in Finland. And still you do not respond to our call for revolt, you do not overthrow your imperialist, Kerensky, although the chances are a hundred to one that your revolt will be successful.

Yes, we shall be real traitors to the International if, at such a moment and under such favourable conditions, we respond to such a call of the German revolutionaries with . . . mere resolutions.

Add to this, as we all perfectly well know, that the plotting and conspiracy of the international imperialists against the Russian revolution are rapidly growing. International imperialism is coming more and more to the idea of stifling the revolution at all costs, stifling it both by military measures and by a peace made at the expense of Russia. It is this that is making the crisis in the world socialist revolution so acute, and that is rendering our procrastination in the matter of revolt particularly dangerous—I would almost say criminal.

Take, further, the internal situation of Russia. The petty-bourgeois compromising parties, which expressed the naive confidence of the masses in Kerensky and in the imperialists in general, are absolutely bankrupt, their collapse is complete. The vote cast against coalition by the Soviet *curia* at the Democratic Conference; the vote cast against coalition by a *majority* of the local Soviets of Peasants' Deputies (in spite of their Central Soviet, where Avksentyev and other friends of Kerensky's are installed); the elections in Moscow, where the working class population has the closest ties with the peasantry, and where over 49 per cent voted for the Bolsheviks (and among the soldiers fourteen thousand out of seventeen thousand)—does this not signify that the confidence

of the masses in Kerensky and in those who are compromising with Kerensky and his friends has totally collapsed? Can one imagine any way in which the masses could say more clearly to the Bolsheviks than they did by this vote: "Lead us, we shall follow you"?

Are we, who have won the majority of the people over to our side, and who have gained the Soviets of both capitals, to wait? What for? For Kerensky and his Kornilovist generals to surrender Petrograd to the Germans, and thus enter directly or indirectly, overtly or covertly, into a conspiracy with both Buchanan and Wilhelm for the purpose of completely stifling the Russian revolution?

By the Moscow vote and by the elections to the Soviets, the people have expressed their confidence in us, but that is not all. There are signs of growing apathy and indifference. That is easily understood. It implies not the ebb of the revolution, as the Cadets and their henchmen vociferate, but the ebb of confidence in resolutions and elections. In a revolution, the masses demand of the leading parties action, not words; they demand victories in the struggle, not talk. The moment is approaching when the people may conceive the opinion that the Bolsheviks are no better than the others, since they were unable to act when confidence was placed in them. . . .

The peasant insurrection is spreading over the whole country. It is perfectly clear that the Cadets and their satellites are minimising it in every way and are representing it to be nothing but "pogroms" and "anarchy." That lie is refuted by the fact that in the centres of revolt the land is beginning to be handed over to the peasants. "Pogroms" and "anarchy" have never led to such splendid political results! The tremendous strength of the peasant revolt is shown by the fact that the compromisers and the Socialist-Revolutionaries of *Dyelo Naroda*, and even Breshko-Breshkovskaya, have begun to talk of giving the land to the peasants in order to stop the movement before it has engulfed them.

And are we to wait until the Cossack detachments of the Kornilovist Kerensky (who was recently exposed as a Kornilovist by the Socialist-Revolutionaries themselves) succeed in suppressing this peasant uprising *piecemeal*?

Apparently, many leaders of our Party have failed to note the specific meaning of the slogan which we all adopted and which we

have repeated endlessly. The slogan is "All power to the Soviets." There were periods, there were moments during the half-year of the revolution, when this slogan did not imply insurrection. Perhaps those periods and those moments blinded some of our comrades and led them to forget that now, at least since the middle of September, this slogan for us too has become *equivalent to a call for insurrection*.

There can be no shadow of doubt on this point. *Dyelo Naroda* recently explained this "in a popular way," when it said, "Kerensky will never submit!" What a question!

The slogan "All power to the Soviets" is a call for revolt. And the blame will be wholly and entirely ours, if we, who for months have been calling upon the masses to revolt and repudiate compromise, fail to lead those masses to revolt on the eve of the collapse of the revolution, after the masses have expressed their confidence in us.

The Cadets and compromisers are trying to scare us by citing the example of July 16-18 (3-5), by pointing to the intensified agitation of the Black Hundreds, and so forth. But if any mistake was made on July 16-18 (3-5), it was that we did not seize power. I think that then there was no mistake, for at that time we were not yet in a majority. But now it would be a fatal mistake, worse than a mistake. The spread of Black Hundred agitation is easily understood; it is an aggravation of extremes in an atmosphere of a developing proletarian and peasant revolution. But to use this as an argument *against* revolt is ridiculous, for the impotence of the Black Hundred hirelings of the capitalists, *the impotence of the Black Hundreds in a fight*, does not even require proof. In a fight, Kornilov and Kerensky can rely only upon the support of the "Savage Division" and the Cossacks. And now demoralisation has set in even among the Cossacks; besides, the peasants are threatening them with civil war within their Cossack territories.

I am writing these lines on Sunday, October 21 (8). You will read them not earlier than October 23 (10). I have heard from a comrade who passed through here that people travelling on the Warsaw railroad say, "Kerensky is leading the Cossacks on Petrograd!" This is quite probable, and it will be entirely our fault if

we do not verify it most carefully and do not make a study of the strength and distribution of the *Kornilovist troops of the second draft*.

Kerensky has again brought Kornilovist troops into the vicinity of Petrograd in order to prevent the power of government from passing into the hands of the Soviets, in order to prevent such a government from proposing an immediate peace, in order to prevent all the land from being immediately handed over to the peasantry and in order to surrender Petrograd to the Germans, while he himself escapes to Moscow! That is the slogan of the insurrection which we must circulate as widely as possible and which will meet with a tremendous response.

We must not wait for the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, which the Central Executive Committee may delay even until November. We must not procrastinate and permit Kerensky to bring up more Kornilovist troops. Finland, the fleet and Reval are represented at the Congress of Soviets. These together can start an immediate movement on Petrograd against the Kornilovist regiments, a movement of the fleet, artillery, machine-guns and two or three army corps, such as have shown, for instance in Viborg, the intensity of their hatred for the Kornilovist generals, with whom Kerensky is again in collusion.

It would be a great mistake were we to fail to seize the opportunity of immediately smashing the Kornilovist regiments of the second draft for fear that, by moving into Petrograd, the Baltic Fleet would allegedly expose the front to the Germans. The Kornilovist slanderers will say this, for they will tell any lie, but it is not worthy of revolutionaries to allow themselves to be frightened by lies and slanders. Kerensky will deliver Petrograd to the Germans, that is now as clear as daylight. No assertion to the contrary can shake our utter conviction that that is so, for it follows from the entire course of events and from Kerensky's entire policy.

Kerensky and the Kornilovists will surrender Petrograd to the Germans. And in order to save Petrograd, Kerensky must be overthrown and the power seized by the *Soviets of both capitals*. These Soviets will immediately propose a peace to all the nations and will thereby fulfil their duty to the German revolutionaries. They

will thereby also be taking a decisive step towards frustrating the criminal conspiracies against the Russian revolution, the conspiracies of international imperialism.

Only the immediate movement of the Baltic Fleet, the Finnish troops, and Reval and Kronstadt against the Kornilovist troops quartered near Petrograd can save the Russian and the world revolutions. Such a movement has ninety-nine chances out of a hundred of leading within a few days to the surrender of a part of the Cossack troops, to the complete defeat of the other part, and to the overthrow of Kerensky, for the workers and the soldiers of both capitals will support such a movement.

Verily, procrastination is like unto death.

The slogan "All power to the Soviets" is a slogan of insurrection. Whoever uses this slogan without having grasped and pondered on this will have only himself to blame. And insurrection must be treated as an art. I insisted on this during the Democratic Conference and I insist on it now; because *that* is what Marxism teaches us, and it is what is being taught us by the present situation in Russia and in the world generally.

It is not a question of voting, of attracting the "Left Socialist-Revolutionaries," of additional provincial Soviets, or of a congress of these Soviets. It is a question of insurrection, which can and must be decided by Petrograd, Moscow, Helsingfors, Kronstadt, Viborg and Reval. *In the vicinity of Petrograd* and in Petrograd itself—that is where the insurrection can, and must, be decided on and effected. It must be effected as earnestly as possible, with as much preparation as possible, as quickly as possible and as energetically as possible.

The fleet, Kronstadt, Viborg, Reval, can and must advance on Petrograd; they must smash the Kornilov regiments, rouse both the capitals, start a mass agitation for a government which will immediately give the land to the peasants and immediately make proposals for peace, and must overthrow Kerensky's government and establish such a government.

Verily, procrastination is like unto death.

N. LENIN

October 21 (8), 1917

**RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF
THE R.S.D.L.P. (BOLSHEVIKS) ON OCTOBER 23 (10), 1917**

THE Central Committee recognises that the international position of the Russian revolution (the mutiny in the German navy, which is an extreme manifestation of the growth of the world socialist revolution throughout Europe, and the threat of an imperialist peace for the purpose of strangling the revolution in Russia) and the military situation (the unquestionable decision of the Russian bourgeoisie and of Kerensky and his coadjutors to surrender Petrograd to the Germans), as well as the fact that the proletarian party has gained a majority in the Soviets—that all this, taken in conjunction with the peasant revolt and the swing of popular confidence towards our Party (the elections in Moscow), and, finally, the obvious preparations being made for a second Kornilov affair (the withdrawal of troops from Petrograd, the drafting of Cossacks into Petrograd, the surrounding of Minsk by Cossacks, etc.)—that all this places armed insurrection on the order of the day.

Realising therefore that armed insurrection is inevitable, and that the time for it has fully matured, the Central Committee enjoins all Party organisations to be guided accordingly, and to discuss and decide all practical questions (the Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region, the withdrawal of troops from Petrograd, the action of the people of Moscow and Minsk, etc.) from this point of view.

A LETTER TO THE COMRADES

COMRADES,

The times we are passing through are so critical, events are moving with such incredible swiftness, that a publicist who by the will of fate has been somewhat removed from the main current of history constantly runs the risk of being belated or of proving not to be *au courant*, particularly if publication of his writings is delayed. While fully realising this, I am nevertheless constrained to address this letter to the Bolsheviks, in spite of the risk that it may never be published. For the vacillations against which I deem it my duty to protest in the most vigorous manner are outrageous and may have a devastating effect upon the Party, the movement of the international proletariat, and the revolution. As for the danger of being belated, in order to prevent it, I shall indicate what information I possess and of what date.

It was only on the morning of Monday, October 29 (16), that I managed to see a comrade who had been present the previous day at a very important Bolshevik gathering in Petrograd and who gave me a detailed account of the discussion. This discussion centred around the very question of insurrection which was discussed by the Sunday papers of all political trends. All the branches of Bolshevik work in the capital were represented at the meeting by their most influential members. Only an insignificant minority of the meeting, two comrades in all, took up a negative attitude. The arguments these comrades advanced were so feeble, so astoundingly indicative of confusion, fright and bankruptcy with regard to every fundamental idea of Bolshevism and revolutionary-proletarian internationalism, that it is not easy to discover the explanation for such shameful vacillation. But the fact remains; and since a revolutionary party has no right to tolerate vacillation over so serious a question, and since this pretty pair of

comrades, who have mislaid their principles, may be the cause of a certain amount of mischief, it is necessary to analyse their arguments, to expose their vacillations and to show how disgraceful they are. The following lines are an attempt to perform this task.

* * *

"... *We do not enjoy a majority among the people, and in the absence of that condition insurrection is hopeless. . .*"

People capable of saying this are either distorters of the truth or pedants who desire at all costs, without the slightest regard for the true circumstances of the revolution, to have a guarantee in advance that the Bolshevik Party throughout the country has received exactly one half the number of votes plus one. Never in any revolution has history given such guarantees; and it is absolutely incapable of giving such guarantees. To advance such a demand is to make game of one's audience; it is nothing but a screen for one's flight from the facts.

For the facts patently show that after the July days the majority of the people began rapidly to come over to the side of the Bolsheviks. This was proved by the elections of September 3 (August 20) in Petrograd, even before the Kornilov affair, when the Bolshevik vote rose from 20 to 33 per cent in the city, not counting the suburbs. It was also proved by the elections to the Borough Dumas in Moscow in September, when the Bolshevik vote rose from 11 to 49½ per cent (a Moscow comrade I saw the other day told me that the exact figure is 51 per cent). It was proved by the new elections to the Soviets. It was proved by the fact that the majority of the Peasants' Soviets, the "Avksentyev" Central Soviet notwithstanding, have expressed their *opposition* to the coalition. To oppose the coalition is *in practice* to support the Bolsheviks.

Furthermore, reports from the front are with increasing frequency and certainty showing that, in spite of the malicious slanders and attacks of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders, officers, deputies, etc., the *mass* of the soldiers are coming over more and more definitely to the side of the Bolsheviks.

Finally, the most outstanding fact of the present-day life of Russia is the revolt of the peasantry. Here we have the fact that

the people are passing over to the Bolsheviks demonstrated not by words, but by deeds. For, notwithstanding the lies of the bourgeois press and its wretched chorus of "vacillating" *Novaya Zhizn*-ists and so forth, who shriek of pogroms and anarchy, the fact is there. The movement of the peasants in the Tambov Gubernia was a revolt, both from the physical and from the political point of view, a revolt that yielded splendid political results, such as, in the first place, the consent to hand over the land to the peasants. It is not without reason that the Socialist-Revolutionary rabble, including *Dyelo Naroda*, terrified by the revolt, are now *shrieking* that it is necessary to hand over the land to the peasants. Here we have the correctness of Bolshevism and its success proved in *practice*. It has been *shown* to be impossible to "teach" the Bonapartists and their lackeys in the Pre-parliament anything except by revolt.

That is a fact. Facts are stubborn things. And such a factual "argument" in favour of revolt is more cogent than the thousands of "pessimistic" evasions of a confused and terrified politician.

Were the peasant revolt not an event of nation-wide political importance, the Socialist-Revolutionary lackeys in the Pre-parliament would not be shouting of the necessity of handing over the land to the peasants.

Another splendid political and revolutionary result of the peasant revolt, already mentioned in *Rabochy Put*, is the fact that grain is being brought to the railroad stations in the Tambov Gubernia. Here is another "argument" for you, gentlemen who have lost your heads, an argument which proves that revolt is the only means of saving the country from the famine that is already knocking at the door and from a crisis of unprecedented dimensions. While the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik betrayers of the people are grumbling, threatening, writing resolutions and promising to feed the starving by convening a Constituent Assembly, the people will proceed to solve the grain problem *in a Bolshevik way*, by means of a *revolt* against the landlords, capitalists, and speculators.

And even the *bourgeois* press, even *Russkaya Volya*, was compelled to admit the results of *this* (the only true) solution of the grain problem, by reporting that the railroad stations in the

Tambov Gubernia were swamped with grain. . . . *After the peasants had revolted!*

No, to doubt now that the majority of the people are following and will follow the Bolsheviks is shameful vacillation and in practice amounts to a renunciation of *every* principle of proletarian revolutionism and a complete repudiation of Bolshevism.

* * *

" . . . We are not strong enough to seize power, while the bourgeoisie is not strong enough to prevent the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. . . ."

The first part of this argument is a simple paraphrase of the preceding argument. It gains nothing in force and conviction by the fact that confusion and fear of the bourgeoisie are expressed in pessimism in relation to the workers and in optimism in relation to the bourgeoisie. When the military cadets and the Cossacks declare that they will fight the Bolsheviks to the last drop of blood, they are worthy of full credence; when, however, the workers and soldiers at hundreds of meetings express their complete confidence in the Bolsheviks and declare their readiness to fight staunchly for the transfer of power to the Soviets, it becomes "appropriate" to recall that to vote is one thing and to fight another!

Of course, if one argues in this way, then revolt is "refuted." But, one asks, how does this peculiarly aimed and peculiarly directed "pessimism" differ from political desertion to the camp of the bourgeoisie?

Look at the facts, remember the declarations repeated thousands of times by the Bolsheviks and now "forgotten" by our pessimists. We have said a thousand times that the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies are a force, that they are the vanguard of the revolution, that they are able to take power. A thousand times we have accused the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries of phrasemongering when they talk of the "plenipotentiary organs of democracy" while at the same time they are *afraid* of the assumption of power by the Soviets.

And what did the Kornilov affair prove? It proved that the Soviets are indeed a force.

And now, after this has been proved by experience, by facts, we are to discard Bolshevism, repudiate ourselves, and declare that we are not strong enough (although the Soviets of both capitals and a majority of the provincial Soviets are on the side of the Bolsheviks)!!! Are not these vacillations shameful? The fact is that our "pessimists" are throwing the slogan "All power to the Soviets" overboard, but are *afraid* to admit it.

How can it be proved that the bourgeoisie is not strong enough to prevent the convocation of the Constituent Assembly?

If the Soviets are *not strong enough* to overthrow the bourgeoisie, then the bourgeoisie is strong enough to prevent the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, for there is nobody else that can prevent it from doing so. Is it worthy of a member of the proletarian party, of a revolutionary, to trust the promises of Kerensky and his associates, to trust the resolutions of the servile Pre-parliament?

Not only will the bourgeoisie be able to prevent the convocation of the Constituent Assembly if the present government is not overthrown, but it will also be able to achieve this result *indirectly* by surrendering Petrograd to the Germans, by opening the front, by increasing the number of lockouts, and by sabotaging deliveries of grain. *Facts* prove that the bourgeoisie has already done all these in part. Consequently, it is capable of doing them *in full*, if it is not overthrown by the workers and soldiers.

* * *

"... The Soviets must be a revolver pressed to the temple of the government with the demand that the Constituent Assembly be convened and Kornilovist attempts abandoned. . . ."

One of the two wretched pessimists went as far as to say that! And he was obliged to go as far as that because to reject insurrection is to reject the slogan "All power to the Soviets."

Of course, it need hardly be said that a slogan is "not a sacred thing." But why has *nobody* raised the question of changing that slogan (as I did after the July days)?¹ Why be *afraid* to talk about it openly, when the Party ever since September has been

¹ Cf. the article "On Slogans," pp. 167-74 in this volume.—Ed.

discussing the question of insurrection, which is now indispensable for the realisation of the slogan "All power to the Soviets"?

Our wretched pessimists will never wriggle out of this. To renounce insurrection is to renounce the transfer of power to the Soviets and to "transfer" all one's hopes and expectations to the kind-hearted bourgeoisie, who have "promised" to convene the Constituent Assembly.

Is it really so difficult to understand that once the *power* is in the hands of the Soviets the Constituent Assembly and its success are *guaranteed*? The Bolsheviks have said so a thousand times. *No one* has ever attempted to refute it. Everybody recognised such a "combined type." But to use the term "combined type" as a shield for rejecting the transfer of power to the Soviets, to do so *secretly* and fear to renounce our slogan openly—what is that? Can one find a parliamentary expression to describe it?

Someone very aptly cast the retort at our pessimist: "A revolver without a bullet?" If so, this means directly siding with the Lieber-Dans, who have a thousand times referred to the Soviets as a "revolver," and have a thousand times deceived the people. For *when they were in control* the Soviets were a mere cipher.

But if it is to be a revolver "with a bullet," this means making *technical* preparations for insurrection. For the bullet must be procured, the revolver must be loaded—ay, and bullets alone will not be enough.

Either one goes over to the Lieber-Dans and *openly* renounces the slogan "All power to the Soviets," or one is for insurrection. There is no middle course.

* * *

"... The bourgeoisie cannot surrender Petrograd to the Germans, although Rodzyanko wants to, for the fighting is being done not by the bourgeois, but by our heroic sailors. . . ."

This argument reveals the same "optimism" regarding the *bourgeoisie* that is being so fatally manifested at every step by the pessimists as to the revolutionary strength and ability of the proletariat.

The fighting is being done by the heroic sailors, *but* this did not prevent *two* admirals from *absconding* just before the seizure of Oesel.

That is a fact. Facts are stubborn things. Facts prove that admirals are *as capable* of treachery as Kornilov. And it is an undisputed fact that the General Staff has not been reformed and that the commanding staff is Kornilovist.

If the Kornilovists (headed by Kerensky, for he is also a Kornilovist) *want* to surrender Petrograd, they can do so in two, or even three, ways.

First, by an act of treachery on the part of the Kornilovist commanding staff they can open the Northern front.

Second, they can come to an "agreement" to leave freedom of action to the German navy, which is *stronger* than ours; they can come to an agreement with both the German and the British imperialists. Furthermore, the "absconding admirals" may have delivered *the plans* to the Germans.

Third, they can by lockouts and by sabotaging the delivery of foodstuffs reduce our troops to *utter* impotence and despair.

Not one of these three methods can be denied. The facts prove that the bourgeois-Cossack party of Russia has already knocked at all three of these doors, that it has tried to open all of them.

What follows? It follows that we have no right to *wait* until the bourgeoisie strangles the revolution.

That Rodzyanko's wishes are not to be trifled with has been proved by experience. Rodzyanko is a man of action. Rodzyanko is backed by *capital*. That is beyond dispute. Capital is a huge force as long as the proletariat has not conquered power. Rodzyanko has been faithfully and loyally carrying out the policy of capital *for decades*.

What follows? It follows that to vacillate on the question of insurrection as the only way of saving the revolution is to sink to that semi-Lieber-Dan, Socialist-Revolutionary-Menshevik, pusillanimous confidence in the bourgeoisie and that "semi-muzhik," naive confidence against which the Bolsheviks have been fighting so hard.

Either fold your useless arms on your empty breast, vowing

your "faith" in the Constituent Assembly, and wait until Rodzyanko and Co. surrender Petrograd and strangle the revolution, or—revolt. There is no middle course.

Even the convocation of the Constituent Assembly will in itself change nothing in this respect, for no "constitutionalism," no voting on the part of any super-sovereign assembly will have the slightest effect on the famine, or the slightest effect on Wilhelm. Both the convocation of the Constituent Assembly and its *success* will depend upon the transfer of power to the Soviets. This old Bolshevik truth is being more and more strikingly and *brutally* corroborated by the facts.

* * *

"... We are growing stronger every day; we can enter the Constituent Assembly as a strong opposition. Why should we stake everything? ..."

This is the argument of a philistine who has "read" that the Constituent Assembly is being convened, and who trustingly confines himself to the most legal and most loyal constitutional course.

Only it is a pity that neither the problem of the famine nor the problem of the surrender of Petrograd can be solved by waiting for the Constituent Assembly. This "trifle" is forgotten by the naive, or by those who have lost their heads or who have allowed themselves to be intimidated.

The famine will not wait. The peasant revolt did not wait. The war will not wait. The absconding admirals did not wait.

Will the famine agree to wait because we Bolsheviks *proclaim* our faith in the convocation of the Constituent Assembly? Will the absconding admirals agree to wait? Will the Maklakovs and Rodzyankos agree to stop the lockouts, the sabotage of grain deliveries, and the secret conspiracies with the British and the German imperialists?

Yet *that* is what the arguments of the heroes of "constitutional illusions" and parliamentary cretinism amount to. Living realities disappear, and all that is left is a *document* on the convocation of the Constituent Assembly; all that is left is the elections.

And the purblind wonder that the hungry people and the soldiers who are being betrayed by the generals and admirals are indifferent to the elections! Oh, ye wiseacres!

* * *

"... If the Kornilovists start things again, we shall show them! But why should we take the risk by starting things ourselves? ..."

How extremely convincing and how extremely revolutionary! History does not repeat itself; but if we turn our *backs* on history, and, contemplating the first Kornilov affair, declaim: "Why, if the Kornilovists start things"—what supreme revolutionary strategy that is! How like that is to "perhaps and maybe"! Maybe the Kornilovists will start again at some inopportune time! A strong argument, is it not? A serious foundation for a proletarian policy!

But what if the Kornilovists of the second draft have learned a thing or two? What if they *wait* for hunger riots, for the front to be broken, for Petrograd to be surrendered, *before* beginning? What then?

We are invited to base the tactics of the proletarian party on the possibility of the Kornilovists repeating one of their former mistakes!

Let us forget all that has been argued and *proved* by the Bolsheviks hundreds of times, all that has been proved by the history of our revolution during the past half-year, namely, that there is *no* way out, that objectively there is not and cannot be any way out, *except* either in a dictatorship of the Kornilovists or in a dictatorship of the proletariat. Let us forget all this, let us renounce all this and wait! Wait for what? Wait for a miracle: namely, that the tempestuous and catastrophic course of events from May 3 (April 20) to September 11 (August 29) will be succeeded (owing to the dragging out of the war and the growing famine) by the peaceful, quiet, smooth and lawful convocation of the Constituent Assembly and by the realisation of its very lawful decisions. That is their "Marxist" tactics! Wait, ye hungry, Kerensky has promised to convoke the Constituent Assembly!

* * *

"... *There is really nothing in the international situation that obliges us to act immediately; on the contrary, we shall damage the cause of the socialist revolution in the West if we allow ourselves to be shot. . . .*"

A truly magnificent argument! Scheidemann himself, Renaudel himself, could not have played more cleverly on the sympathies of the workers for the international socialist revolution!

Just think of it: under devilishly difficult conditions, with but one Liebknecht (and he in prison), without newspapers, without freedom of assembly, without Soviets, with *every* class of the population, down to the last well-to-do peasant, incredibly hostile to the idea of internationalism, and with the imperialist big, middle, and petty bourgeoisie excellently organised—the Germans, *i.e.*, the German revolutionary internationalists, the German workers clad in sailors' uniforms, started a mutiny in the navy, having perhaps one chance in a hundred.

But we, with our dozens of newspapers, freedom of assembly, a *majority* in the Soviets, we proletarian internationalists, the best-situated in the world, are to refuse to support the German revolutionaries by our revolt. We are to reason, like the Scheidemanns and Renaudels, that it would be more prudent not to revolt, for if we are shot the world will lose such splendid, such sensible, such ideal internationalists!

Let us prove how sensible we are. Let us pass a resolution of sympathy with the *German* insurrectionaries and renounce *insurrection* in Russia. That will be genuine and sensible internationalism. And how fast world internationalism would blossom forth, were the same wise policy to triumph *everywhere!* . . .

The workers of all countries are incredibly worn and exhausted by the war. Outbreaks in Italy, in Germany, and in Austria are becoming more and more frequent. We alone have Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Let us then keep on waiting. Let us betray the German internationalists as we are betraying the Russian peasants, who, not by words but by deeds, by their revolt against the landlords, are appealing to us to rise against Krensky's government. . . .

What if the clouds of imperialist conspiracy being hatched by

the capitalists of all countries, who are ready to strangle the Russian revolution, are growing blacker and blacker! Let us wait calmly until we are strangled *by the ruble!* Instead of attacking the conspirators and breaking their ranks by a victory of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, let us wait for the Constituent Assembly, where all international plots will be vanquished by *voting*, that is, provided Kerensky and Rodzyanko honestly convene the Constituent Assembly. And have we any right to doubt Kerensky's and Rodzyanko's honesty?

* * *

"... But 'everybody' is against us! We are isolated; the Central Executive Committee, the Menshevik-internationalists, the Novaya Zhiznists, and the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries have all issued and will issue manifestoes against us! ..."

A cogent argument, indeed! Until now we mercilessly castigated the vacillators for their vacillations. *By so doing* we won the sympathies of the people. *By so doing* we won the Soviets, without which insurrection could not be reliable, rapid and certain. And now we are to use the Soviets we won in order that we too *may go over to the camp of the vacillators*. What a splendid career for Bolshevism!

The whole essence of the policy of the Lieber-Dans and the Chernovs, and also of the "Lefts" among the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, is *vacillation*. The Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Menshevik-internationalists possess great political significance, inasmuch as they serve *as an index that the masses are moving to the Left*. The passing of some 40 per cent of both the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries into the camp of the Lefts on the one hand and the peasant revolt on the other are two facts which are undoubtedly and obviously connected.

But the very nature of this connection reveals the abysmal feebleness of character of those who now think fit to whine because the Central Executive Committee, which is rotting alive, and the vacillating Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and their like have come out against us. For the vacillations of the petty-bourgeois leaders—the Martovs, Kamkovs, Sukhanovs, and the rest—must be contrasted to the *revolt* of the peasants. Here we have a *real* political

contrast. With whom shall we throw in our lot? With the handful of vacillating Petrograd leaders, who were an indirect expression of the Leftward movement of the masses, and who at every political turn shamefully whined and vacillated and ran to beg forgiveness of the Lieber-Dans, Avksentyevs, and so forth—or *with the masses, that have moved to the Left?*

That is the only way to regard the matter.

Because the peasant revolt was betrayed by the Martovs, the Kamkovs and the Sukhanovs, it is proposed that we, the workers' party of revolutionary internationalists, should also betray it. This is what the policy of "casting eyes" at the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and Menshevik-internationalists amounts to.

But we said: In order to help the vacillating, we must stop vacillating ourselves. Those dear Left petty-bourgeois democrats even vacillated in favour of a coalition! In the end we got them to follow us by not vacillating ourselves. And the facts have vindicated us.

These gentlemen by their vacillations always ruined the revolution. It was we who saved it. And now, when famine is knocking at the gates of Petrograd, and Rodzyanko and Co. are preparing to surrender the city, are we to throw up the sponge?

* * *

"... But we have not even firm contacts with the railway workers and the postal employees. Their official representatives are the Plansons. Can we succeed without the post office and without the railways? ..."*

Yes, yes, Plansons here, Lieber-Dans there. What confidence have the *masses* shown in them? Was it not we who always asserted that these leaders are betraying the *masses*? Was it not from these leaders that the masses turned *towards us* at the elections in Moscow and at the elections to the Soviets? Or are the masses of railroad and postal employees not starving? Are they not on strike against the government of Kerensky and Co.?

"Did we have contacts with these unions before March 13 (February 28)?" one comrade asked the "pessimist." The latter replied by pointing out that the two revolutions were not comparable. But that reply only *strengthens* the position of the

questioner. For it was the Bolsheviks who thousands of times pointed out the long preparation which a *proletarian* revolution *against the bourgeoisie* must undergo (and did so not in order that it should be forgotten on the eve of decisive action). The political and economic life of the Postal and Telegraph Employees' and the Railwaymen's Unions are marked precisely by the *separation* of the proletarian elements of the masses from the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois leaders. The important thing is not necessarily to secure "contacts" with any particular union beforehand; the important thing is that only a successful proletarian and peasant insurrection *can* satisfy the *masses* of the army of railwaymen and of postal and telegraph employees.

* * *

"... *There is bread in Petrograd enough for only two or three days. Can we give bread to the insurrectionaries? ...*"

This is one of the thousand sceptical remarks (sceptics are *always* liable to "doubt," and you can refute them only by experience), the kind of remark that places the burden on the wrong shoulders.

It is Rodzyanko and Co., it is the bourgeoisie, who are in fact causing the famine and speculating on strangling the revolution with the aid of famine. There is, and can be, *no* escape from famine except by a revolt of the peasants against the landlords in the countryside and a victory of the workers over the capitalists in the cities and in the centre. *There is no other way* of getting grain from the rich, or of transporting it, despite their sabotage, or of smashing the resistance of corrupted employees and profiteering capitalists, or of establishing a strict system of accounting. This has been proved by the history of the supply organisations and of the efforts to regulate food supply on the part of the "democracy," who *complained* a million times of the sabotage of the capitalists, *whining and imploring*.

There is no power on earth that can transform complaints, supplications and tears into *revolutionary action* except the power of a victorious proletarian revolution. And the longer the proletarian revolution is delayed, the longer it is put off either by events

or by the vacillations of the waverers and the distraught, the more victims will it cost and the more difficult will it be to *organise* the transportation and distribution of grain.

"In an insurrection procrastination is like unto death"—that must be our answer to those who have the deplorable "courage," in spite of the increasing economic ruin and the approach of famine, to *dissuade* the workers from insurrection (*that is, to persuade them to wait and to continue to trust the bourgeoisie*).

* * *

"... The situation at the front is not yet dangerous either. Even if the soldiers themselves conclude an armistice that will be no calamity. . . ."

But the soldiers will not conclude an armistice. That requires the power of the state, and the latter cannot be secured without an insurrection. The soldiers will simply *desert*. This is confirmed by reports from the front. We cannot wait without the risk of aiding an agreement between Rodzyanko and Wilhelm, without the risk of *complete* economic ruin and the wholesale desertion of the soldiers, if they (who are already on the verge of despair) reach the point of utter despair and abandon everything to the will of fate.

* * *

"... But if we take power and do not obtain either an armistice or a democratic peace, the soldiers may refuse to fight in a revolutionary war. What then? . . ."

This argument reminds us of the proverb: One fool can ask ten times more questions than ten wise men can answer.

We have never denied the difficulties of governing during an imperialist war; nevertheless, we have always *advocated* a dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasantry. Are we then to recant now that the moment for action has arrived?

We have always said that a dictatorship of the proletariat in one country will cause gigantic changes in the international situation, in the economic life of the country, in the state of the army, and in its frame of mind. Are we to "forget" all that now and allow ourselves to be frightened by the "difficulties" of revolution?

* * *

"... As everybody reports, the masses are not in a mood that urges them on to the streets. Among the signs justifying pessimism is the extreme spread of the pogromist and Black Hundred press. . . ."

When people allow themselves to be intimidated by the bourgeoisie, all objects and all phenomena naturally assume a jaundiced hue. First, they substitute an intellectual-impressionist criterion of the movement for a Marxist criterion; subjective impressions as to moods *replace* a political analysis of the development of the class struggle and of the course of events in the country as a whole, in the international situation as a whole. It is, of course, "conveniently" forgotten that a firm line on the part of the Party, its unyielding resolve, is *also a factor* in the mood, particularly at an acute revolutionary moment. It is sometimes very "convenient" for people to forget that responsible leaders, by their vacillations and their readiness to burn the idols they worshipped yesterday, cause the most untoward vacillations in the mood of certain sections of the masses.

Secondly—and this is at present the main thing—when they talk about the mood of the masses, these spineless people forget to add:

That "everybody" reports that it is tense and expectant;

That "everybody" is agreed that, upon the first call of the Soviets, and in defence of the Soviets, the workers will rise as one man;

That "everybody" is agreed that the workers are extremely dissatisfied with the indecision of the centres on the question of the "last decisive struggle," the inevitability of which is clearly realised;

That "everybody" is unanimous in describing the mood of the broad masses of the people as bordering upon desperation and in pointing to the consequent growth of anarchism;

That "everybody" likewise recognises that there is a decided unwillingness among the class conscious workers to go on to the street *only* for the sake of a demonstration, or *only* to engage in a partial struggle, since the approach of a general struggle, and not of a partial struggle, is felt in the air, while the hopelessness

of individual strikes, demonstrations, and acts of pressure has been shown by experience and is fully realised.

And so forth.

If we examine this description of the mood of the masses from the point of view of the entire development of the class and political struggle and of the entire course of events during the half-year of our revolution, it will be clearly seen how the facts are being distorted by these people who have been intimidated by the bourgeoisie. The situation is not now what it was prior to May 3-4 (April 20-21), June 22 (9), or July 16 (3); for then there was a *spontaneous excitement*, which we, as a party, either failed to realise, as in the case of May 3 (April 20), or tried to restrain and shape into a peaceful demonstration, as in the case of June 22 (9) and July 16 (3). For at that time we were fully aware that the Soviets were not *yet* ours, that the peasants still trusted the Lieber-Dan-Chernov course, and not the Bolshevik course (insurrection), and that, consequently, we could not have the majority of the people behind us, and hence insurrection was premature.

At that time the majority of class conscious workers did not even think of the last decisive struggle; and there was not a single Party body that would have raised this question. As to the less enlightened masses, and the broad masses generally, their despair was neither concentrated nor resolute; there was only a spontaneous *ferment*, accompanied by the naive hope of "influencing" the Kerenskys and the bourgeoisie by a mere act of demonstration.

But this is not what is needed for an insurrection; what is needed is, first, the conscious, firm and inflexible resolve of the class conscious to fight to the bitter end. Secondly, what is needed is a mood of concentrated desperation on the part of the broad masses, who feel that nothing can now be saved by half-measures; that "influencing" is out of the question; that the starving will "smash everything, destroy everything, even anarchically," *if* the Bolsheviks are not able to lead them in the decisive battle.

And, in fact, the development of the revolution has brought both the workers and the peasants to precisely such a combination of tense concentration as the result of experience on the part of

the class conscious elements, and of hatred, bordering on desperation, towards the lockout employers and capitalists on the part of the broad masses.

And it is precisely because of this that we can understand the "success" of the scoundrels of the Black Hundred press who masquerade in the guise of Bolshevism. The Black Hundreds are maliciously jubilant over the approach of a decisive battle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, as has always been the case and has been observed in every revolution without exception. That is absolutely unavoidable. And if you allow yourselves to be intimidated by *this* circumstance, you must renounce not only insurrection, but the proletarian revolution in general. For there can be *no* growth of this revolution in capitalist society which is *not* accompanied by the malicious glee of the Black Hundreds and their hope of making a good thing for themselves out of it.

The class conscious workers know perfectly well that the Black Hundreds work hand in hand with the bourgeoisie, that a decisive victory of the workers (in which the petty bourgeois do not believe, which the capitalists fear, and which the Black Hundreds at times wish for, out of sheer malice, being convinced that the Bolsheviks cannot retain power) will utterly *smash* the Black Hundreds, and that the Bolsheviks will be *able* to retain power and retain it firmly to the great advantage of the whole of war-worn and tortured humanity.

And, indeed, is there anybody in his senses who can doubt that the *Rodzyankos* and *Suvorins* are acting in unison and that the parts have been distributed among them?

Have not the facts shown that Kerensky is acting at Rodzyanko's bidding, while the "State Printing Press of the Russian Republic" (don't laugh!) is printing at the expense of the state the Black Hundred speeches of the Black Hundreds of the "State Duma"? Has not this fact been exposed even by the lackeys on *Dyelo Naroda* while doing lackey service to "their man"? Has not the experience of *all* elections proved that the Cadet lists were fully supported by *Novoye Vremya*, that venal sheet, controlled by tsarist-landlord "interests"?

Did we not read yesterday that commercial and industrial cap-

ital (non-party of course! oh, non-party, to be sure! the Vikhlyayevs and Rakitnikovs, the Gvozdevs and Nikitins are in coalition not with the Cadets—god forbid!—but with non-party commercial and industrial circles) handed out a round 300,000 rubles to the Cadets?

The whole Black Hundred press, if we regard things from a class, and not a sentimental, point of view, is a branch of the firm "Ryabushinsky, Milyukov and Co." Capital buys, on the one hand, the Milyukovs, Zaslavskys, Potresovs, and so on, and, on the other, the Black Hundreds.

There is no means of putting an end to this monstrous poisoning of the people by the virus of the Black Hundred plague, except the *victory of the proletariat*.

Is it to be wondered that the crowd, worn and tortured by hunger and by the dragging out of the war, so eagerly grasp at the Black Hundred poison? Can one imagine capitalist society on the eve of collapse with despair *not* reigning in the hearts of the oppressed masses? And could the despair of the masses, among whom there is so much ignorance, find expression otherwise than in an increased consumption of all sorts of poison?

No; the position of those who, when they talk of the mood of the masses, attribute to the masses their own spinelessness is a hopeless one. The masses are divided into those who are consciously waiting and those who in their ignorance are ready to sink into despair. But the masses of the oppressed and starving are *not* spineless.

* * *

"... On the other hand, the Marxist party cannot reduce insurrection to a military conspiracy..."

Marxism is an extremely profound and many-sided doctrine. It is, therefore, not surprising that *scraps* of quotations from Marx—especially when the quotations are *not* to the point—can always be found among the "arguments" of those who are breaking with Marxism. A military conspiracy is Blanquism *if* it is not organised by the party of a definite class; *if* its organisers have not reckoned with the political situation in general and the international situation in particular; *if* the party in question does not enjoy the

sympathy of the majority of the people, as proved by definite facts; *if* the development of events in the revolution has not led to the virtual dissipation of the illusions of compromise entertained by the petty bourgeoisie; *if* the majority of the organs of revolutionary struggle which are recognised to be "authoritative" or have otherwise established themselves, such as the Soviets, have not been won over; *if* in the army (in time of war) sentiments hostile to a government which drags out an unjust war against the will of the people have not become fully matured; *if* the slogans of the insurrection (such as "All power to the Soviets," "Land to the peasants," "Immediate proposal of a democratic peace to all the belligerent peoples, coupled with the immediate abrogation of all secret treaties and secret diplomacy," etc.) have not acquired the widest renown and popularity; *if* the advanced workers are not convinced of the desperate situation of the masses and of the support of the countryside, as demonstrated by an energetic peasant movement, or by a revolt against the landlords and against the government that defends the landlords; *if* the economic situation in the country offers any real hope of a favourable solution of the crisis by peaceful and parliamentary means.

Is that enough?

In my pamphlet *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?* (which I expect will appear in the next few days), I quote a passage from Marx which really does bear upon the question of insurrection and which defines the features which make insurrection an "art."¹

I am ready to wager that, if we were to ask those windbags who are now in Russia raising an outcry about a military conspiracy to speak up and explain the difference between the "art" of armed insurrection and a military conspiracy deserving of condemnation, they would either repeat what has been said above, or would disgrace themselves and provoke general laughter among the workers. Try it, dear also-Marxists! Sing us your little song *against* "military conspiracy"!

¹ See pp. 291-92 in the present volume.—Ed

POSTSCRIPT

The above lines had already been written when at eight o'clock on Tuesday evening I received the Petrograd morning papers and found an article by Mr. V. Bazarov in *Novaya Zhizn*. Mr. V. Bazarov asserts that "a handwritten leaflet was circulated in the city, which in the name of two prominent Bolsheviks declared against action."

If this is true, I beg the comrades, whom this letter cannot reach earlier than Wednesday noon, to *publish* it as early as possible.

It was not written for the press, but as an interchange of opinions with the members of our Party by correspondence. But if the heroes of *Novaya Zhizn*, who do not belong to the Party and who have been ridiculed by it a hundred times for their contemptible feebleness of will (who the day before yesterday voted for the Bolsheviks, yesterday for the Mensheviks, and who *almost* united them at the world-famous Unity Congress), if such individuals receive a *leaflet* from members of our Party agitating against insurrection, we cannot remain silent. We must agitate *for* insurrection. Let the anonymous individuals come out openly into the light of day and bear the punishment they deserve for their shameful vacillations—be it only the ridicule of every class conscious worker. I have only one hour at my disposal before dispatching the present letter to Petrograd, and I will therefore only in a word or two point out one "method" resorted to by the wretched heroes of witless *Novaya Zhizn*-ism. Mr. V. Bazarov attempts to argue with Comrade Ryazanov, who said, and was a thousand times right in saying, that "insurrection is being prepared by those who are creating a mood of despair and indifference among the masses."

The wretched hero of a wretched cause rejoins: "Have despair and indifference ever triumphed?"

Oh, contemptible fools of *Novaya Zhizn*! Do they know of examples of revolt in history when the masses of the oppressed classes were victorious in desperate fight without having first been reduced to a state of desperation by protracted suffering and by

the extreme aggravation of crises of all kinds; when those masses were not overcome by indifference towards various servile Pre-parliaments, towards idle playing at revolution, towards the degradation of the Soviets by the Lieber-Dans from organs of power and insurrection to the role of empty talkshops?

Or perhaps the contemptible fools of *Novaya Zhizn* have discovered that the masses are *indifferent* to the questions of bread, the dragging out of the war, and land for the peasants?

October 29-30 (16-17), 1917

A LETTER TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BOLSHEVIK PARTY

COMRADES,

I have not yet been able to receive the Petrograd papers for Wednesday, October 31 (18). When the full text of Kamenev's and Zinoviev's declaration, published in *Novaya Zhizn*, which is not a Party paper, was transmitted to me by telephone, I refused to believe it. But doubt proved to be out of the question, and I am obliged to take this opportunity in order that this letter may reach the members of the Party by Thursday evening or Friday morning, for to remain silent in the face of such unheard-of *strike-breaking* would be a crime.

The more serious the practical problem, and the more responsible and "prominent" the persons guilty of strike-breaking, the more dangerous it is, the more resolutely must the strike-breakers be thrown out, and the more unpardonable would it be to hesitate even in consideration of the past "services" of the strike-breakers.

Just think of it! It is known in Party circles that the Party since September has been discussing the question of insurrection. Nobody has ever heard of a single letter or leaflet written by either of the persons named! Now, on the eve, one might say, of the Congress of Soviets, two prominent Bolsheviks come out *against* the majority, and, obviously, *against* the Central Committee. That is not stated directly, but the harm done to the cause is all the greater, for to speak in hints is even more dangerous.

It is perfectly clear from the text of Kamenev's and Zinoviev's declaration that they have gone against the Central Committee, for otherwise their declaration would be meaningless. But it is not stated *what* specific decision of the Central Committee they are disputing.

Why?

The reason is obvious: because it has not been published by the Central Committee.

What does this amount to?

On a burning question of supreme importance, on the eve of the critical day of November 2 (October 20), and in the *non-Party* press, indeed, in a paper which on this question is *hand in glove with the bourgeoisie against the workers' party*, two "prominent" Bolsheviks attack an *unpublished* decision of the Party centre!

Why, this is a thousand times more despicable and *a million times more harmful* than all the utterances Plekhanov made in the *non-Party* press in 1906-07, which the Party so sharply condemned. For at that time it was only a question of elections, while now it is a question of an insurrection for the conquest of power!

And on such a question, *after* a decision has been taken by the centre, to dispute this *unpublished* decision before the Rodzyankos and Kerenskys in a *non-Party* paper—can one imagine anything more treacherous, a more heinous act of strike-breaking?

I should consider it disgraceful on my part if I were to hesitate to condemn these former comrades because of my former close relations with them. I declare outright that I no longer consider either of them comrades and that I will fight with all my might, both in the Central Committee and at the Congress, to secure their expulsion from the Party.

For a workers' party, which the facts of the situation are confronting more and more frequently with the necessity for insurrection, cannot accomplish that difficult task if unpublished decisions of the centre, after their adoption, are to be disputed in the *non-Party* press, and vacillation and confusion brought into the ranks of the fighters.

Let Messrs. Zinoviev and Kamenev found their own party from the dozens of disoriented people, or from the candidates to the Constituent Assembly. The workers will not join such a party, for its first slogan will be:

"Members of the Central Committee who are defeated at a meeting of the Central Committee on the question of a decisive

fight are permitted to resort to the non-Party press for the purpose of attacking the unpublished decisions of the Party."

Let them build themselves *such* a party; our workers' Bolshevik Party will only gain thereby.

When all the documents are published, the strike-breaking activities of Zinoviev and Kamenev will stand out still more glaringly. In the meantime, let the following question engage the attention of the workers:

Let us assume that the Executive Committee of an all-Russian trade union had decided, after a month's deliberation and by a majority of over 80 per cent, that preparations must be made for a strike, but that for the time being the date or any other details should not be divulged. Let us assume that *after* the decision had been taken two members, under the false pretext of a "dissenting opinion," not only began to write to the local groups urging a reconsideration of the decision, but also permitted their letters to be communicated to newspapers of other parties. Let us, finally, assume that they themselves attacked the decision in papers of other parties, although it had not yet been published, and began to denounce the strike to the capitalists.

We ask, would the workers hesitate in expelling such strike-breakers from their midst?

* * *

As to the question of insurrection now, when November 2 (October 20) is so close at hand, I cannot from afar judge to what extent the cause has been damaged by the strike-breaking declaration in the non-Party press. There is no doubt that very great *practical* damage has been done. In order to remedy the situation, it is first necessary to restore unity to the Bolshevik front by expelling the strike breakers.

The weakness of the ideological arguments against insurrection will become the clearer, the more we drag them into the light. I recently sent an article on this question to *Rabochy Put*, and if the editors do not find it possible to print it, members of the Party will probably acquaint themselves with it in the manuscript.¹

¹ Lenin is referring to "A Letter to the Comrades," pp. 304-24 in this volume.—*Ed.*

These so-called "ideological" arguments reduce themselves to two. First, that it is necessary to "wait" for the Constituent Assembly. Let us wait, maybe we can hold on until then—that is the whole argument. Maybe, despite famine, despite economic ruin, despite the fact that the patience of the soldiers is exhausted, despite Rodzyanko's measures to surrender Petrograd to the Germans (even despite the lockouts), perhaps we can hold on.

Perhaps and maybe—that is the whole point of the argument.

The second is a shrill pessimism. Everything is well with the bourgeoisie and Kerensky; everything is wrong with us. The capitalists have everything wonderfully in hand; everything is wrong with the workers. The "pessimists" are shouting at the top of their voices about the military side of the matter; and the "optimists" hold their peace, for to disclose anything to Rodzyanko and Kerensky is hardly pleasant to anybody but strike-breakers.

* * *

Difficult times. A difficult task. A serious betrayal.

Nevertheless, the problem will be solved; the workers will consolidate their ranks, and the peasant revolt and the extreme impatience of the soldiers at the front will do their work! Let us close our ranks—the proletariat must win!

N. LENIN

October 31 (18), 1917

A LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY ¹

DEAR COMRADES,

No self-respecting party can tolerate strike-breaking and strike-breakers in its midst. That is obvious. The more we reflect upon Zinoviev's and Kamenev's utterance in the non-Party press, the more certain it becomes that their action is strike-breaking in the full meaning of the term. The evasion resorted to by Kamenev at the meeting of the Petrograd Soviet is absolutely despicable: he is, don't you see, in full agreement with Trotsky. But is it so difficult to understand that in the face of the enemy Trotsky *could not* have said, he had no right to say, and should not have said more than he did? Is it so difficult to understand that it is the *duty* of a party which is *concealing its decision* from the enemy (as to the necessity for an armed insurrection, the fact that it is fully ripe, that exhaustive preparations are being made for it, etc.)—and that this decision makes it *binding*—in public utterances to fasten not only the blame, but also the initiative upon the adversary? Only a child could fail to understand that. Kamenev's evasion is a sheer fraud. The same must be said of Zinoviev's evasion; at least of his letter of "justification" (published, I think, in the central organ), which is the only document I have seen (for, as to a dissenting opinion, an alleged dissenting opinion, which has been trumpeted in the *bourgeois* press, I, a member of the Central Committee, have *to this very day* seen nothing of it). Among Zinoviev's "arguments" there is this: Lenin, he says, sent out his letters "before any decisions were adopted," and you did not protest. That is literally what Zinoviev wrote, himself underscoring the word *before* four times. Is it really so difficult to understand

that *before* a decision has been taken on the question of a strike by the centre, it is permissible to agitate for and against it; but that *after* a decision in favour of a strike has been taken (with the added decision to conceal the fact from the enemy), to carry on agitation against the strike is strike-breaking? Every worker will understand that. The question of armed insurrection has been discussed in the centre since September. That is when Zinoviev and Kamenev could and should have come out in writing, and then *everybody*, upon seeing their arguments, would have realised that they had completely lost their heads. To conceal one's views from the Party for a whole month *before* a decision is taken, and to send out a dissenting opinion *after* a decision is taken—that is to be a strike-breaker.

Zinoviev pretends not to understand this difference; he pretends not to understand that after a decision to strike has been taken, a decision of the centre, only strike-breakers can carry on agitation among the lower bodies against that decision. Every worker will understand that.

And that is just what Zinoviev did; he agitated against and strove to secure the defeat of the decision of the centre, both at Sunday's meeting, where he and Kamenev secured not a single supporting vote, and in his present letter. For Zinoviev has the effrontery to assert that "the opinion of the Party has not been canvassed" and that such questions "cannot be decided by ten men." Just think! Every member of the Central Committee knows that more than ten members of the Central Committee were present at the decisive meeting, that a *majority of the plenum* were present, that Kamenev himself declared at the meeting that "this meeting is decisive," that as to the absent members of the Central Committee it was known with absolute certainty that the *majority* of them *were not in agreement* with Zinoviev and Kamenev. And now, *after* the Central Committee has adopted a decision at a meeting which Kamenev himself admitted to be *decisive*, a member of the Central Committee has the audacity to write that "the opinion of the Party has not been canvassed," and that such questions "cannot be decided by ten men." That is strike-breaking in the full sense of the term. Between Party congresses, the Central Committee

decides. The Central Committee has decided. Kamenev and Zinoviev, who *before* the decision was taken did not come out in writing, disputed the decision of the Central Committee *after* it was taken.

That is strike-breaking in the full sense of the term. After a decision has been taken, *no questioning of that decision can be tolerated*, particularly when it concerns immediate and *secret* preparations for a strike. Now Zinoviev has the insolence to blame us for "warning the enemy." Is there any limit to his brazenness? Who is it that has ruined the cause, frustrated the strike by "warning the enemy," if not those who came out on the subject in the *non-Party* press?

How can one attack a "decisive" resolution of the Party in a paper which on this question is hand in glove with the bourgeoisie? If that is tolerated, the Party will become impossible, the Party will be destroyed.

To call that which Bazarov learns about and publishes in a non-Party paper a "dissenting opinion" is to mock at the Party.

Kamenev's and Zinoviev's outbreak in the non-Party press was despicable for the added reason that the Party was not in a position to refute their *slandorous lie* openly. I know of no decisions regarding the date, Kamenev writes and publishes in his own name and in the name of Zinoviev (after such a statement, Zinoviev bears full responsibility for Kamenev's conduct and utterances).

How can the Central Committee refute that?

We cannot tell the capitalists the truth, namely, that we have *decided* on a strike and have *decided to conceal the moment chosen for it*.

We cannot refute the slanderous lie of Zinoviev and Kamenev *without doing still greater damage to the cause*. And therein lies the utter baseness, the real treachery of these two individuals; they have revealed the strikers' plan to the capitalists, and since we remain silent in the press everybody will guess *how* things stand.

Kamenev and Zinoviev have *betrayed* to Rodzyanko and Kerensky the decision of the Central Committee of their Party on

armed insurrection and the fact that preparations for armed insurrection and the date appointed for the armed insurrection were being concealed from the enemy. That is a fact. No evasions can refute that fact. Two members of the Central Committee have by a slanderous lie *betrayed* the decision of the workers to the capitalists. There can, and must, be only one answer to that: an immediate decision of the Central Committee in the following terms:

"Regarding Zinoviev's and Kamenev's utterance in the non-Party press as strike-breaking in the full sense of the term, the Central Committee expels both of them from the Party."

It is not easy for me to write thus about former close comrades; but I should regard any hesitation in this respect as a crime, for a party of revolutionaries which did not punish prominent strike-breakers would *perish*.

The question of armed insurrection, even if the strike-breakers have now delayed it for a long time by betraying it to Rodzyanko and Kerensky, has not been *removed from the agenda* by the Party. But how can we prepare ourselves for armed insurrection and lay plans for it, if we tolerate "prominent" strike-breakers in our midst? The more prominent a man is, the more dangerous he is, and the less deserving he is of "forgiveness," the French say. Only your *close* associate can betray you.

The more "prominent" the strike-breakers are, the more imperative it is to punish them by immediate expulsion.

That is the only way to restore the workers' party to health, to rid ourselves of a dozen or so spineless intellectuals, to rally the ranks of the revolutionaries, to go forth to meet great and momentous difficulties and to march hand in hand with the *revolutionary workers*.

We cannot publish the truth, namely, that *after* the decisive meeting of the Central Committee, Zinoviev and Kamenev at Sunday's meeting had the audacity to demand a *revision*; that Kamenev had the effrontery to call out: "The Central Committee has suffered defeat, for it has done nothing for a whole week" (I could *not* refute that because to say what *really had been done* was impossible), while Zinoviev with an air of innocence proposed this resolution, which was rejected by the meeting: "No action shall

be taken before consulting with the Bolsheviks who are to arrive on November 2 (October 20) for the Congress of Soviets."

Just think! After the *centre* has taken a decision to call a strike, it is proposed at a meeting of the rank and file that it be postponed (until November 2 [October 20], when the Congress was to convene. The Congress was subsequently postponed . . . the Zinovievs trust the Lieber-Dans!) and be referred to a body which does not know the Party rules, which has *no* authority over the Central Committee, and which does not know Petrograd.

And after this Zinoviev still has the insolence to write: "This is hardly the way to strengthen the unity of the Party."

What else can you call it but a threat of a split?

My answer to this threat is that I will go the limit, I will win freedom of speech for myself before the workers, and I will, *at whatever cost*, brand the strike-breaker Zinoviev as a strike-breaker. My answer to the threat of a split is to declare a fight to a finish, a fight for the expulsion of both strike-breakers from the Party.

The executive committee of a trade union, after a month of deliberation, decides that a strike is unavoidable, that the time is ripe, but that the date is to be concealed from the employers. After that, two members of the executive committee appeal *to the rank and file*, disputing the decision, and are defeated. Thereupon these two come out in the press and with the help of a slanderous lie betray the decision of the executive committee to the capitalists, thus more than half defeating the strike, or delaying it to a less favourable time by warning the enemy.

Here we have strike-breaking in the full sense of the term. And that is why I demand the expulsion of both the strike-breakers, reserving the right (in view of their threat of a split) to publish *everything* when publication becomes possible.

November 1 (October 19), 1917

A LETTER TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

COMRADES,

I am writing these lines on the evening of November 6 (October 24). The situation is critical in the extreme. It is absolutely clear that to delay the insurrection now will veritably be fatal.

I exhort my comrades with all my heart and strength to realise that everything now hangs on a thread; that we are being confronted by problems that can be solved not by conferences or congresses (even Congresses of Soviets), but exclusively by the people, by the masses, by the struggle of the armed masses.

The bourgeois onslaught of the Kornilovists and the removal of Verkhovsky show that we must not wait. We must at all costs, this very evening, this very night, arrest the government, first disarming (defeating, if they offer resistance) the *Junkers* and so forth.

We must not wait! We may lose everything!

The gain from the seizure of power immediately will be that the people (not the Congress, but the people, the army and the peasants in the first place) will be defended from the Kornilovist government, which has driven out Verkhovsky and has hatched a second Kornilov plot.

Who must take power?

At present that is not important. Let the Revolutionary Military Committee take it, or "some other institution," declaring that it will relinquish the power only to the true representatives of the interests of the people, the interests of the army (immediate proposals for peace), the interests of the peasants (the land to be taken immediately and private property abolished), the interests of the starving.

All boroughs, all regiments, all forces must be mobilised immediately and must send their delegations to the Revolutionary Military Committee and to the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks with the insistent demand that under no circumstances shall the power be left in the hands of Kerensky and Co. until November 7 (October 25); not under any circumstances; the matter must be decided unconditionally this very evening, or this very night.

History will not forgive revolutionaries for procrastinating when they can be victorious today (will certainly be victorious today), while they risk losing much, in fact, everything, tomorrow.

If we seize power today, we seize it not in opposition to the Soviets but on their behalf.

The seizure of power is a matter of insurrection; its political purpose will be clear after the seizure.

It would be a disaster, or a sheer formality, to await the wavering vote of November 7 (October 25). The people have the right and the duty to decide such questions not by a vote, but by force; in critical moments of revolution, the people have the right and the duty to give directions to their representatives, even their best representatives, and not to wait for them.

This is proved by the history of all revolutions; and it would be an infinite crime on the part of the revolutionaries were they to let the moment pass, knowing that upon them depends the *salvation of the revolution*, the proposal of peace, the saving of Petrograd, salvation from famine, the transfer of the land to the peasants.

The government is wavering. It must be *destroyed* at all costs! To delay action will be fatal.

November 6 (October 24), 1917

REPORT ON THE AGRARIAN QUESTION

*Delivered at the April All-Russian Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.,
May 11 (April 28), 1917*

COMRADES, the agrarian question was discussed by our Party so thoroughly during the first revolution ¹ that by this time, I think, our ideas on the subject are pretty well defined, an indirect proof of which is the fact that the commission of the Conference, which is composed of comrades who are fully versed in and have studied this subject, came to a unanimous agreement on the proposed draft of the resolution and introduced no radical amendments. I shall therefore confine myself to a few very brief remarks. Since all the members are in possession of the draft, in the form of proof sheets, there is no necessity to read it in full.

The present growth of the agrarian movement all over Russia is an obvious and undeniable fact. The programme of our Party, adopted by the Stockholm Congress in 1906, upon the proposal of the Mensheviks, was refuted even by the course of the first Russian revolution. At that Congress the Mensheviks carried through their programme of municipalisation, the essence of which was as follows: the peasant lands, both communal and homestead, were to remain the property of the peasants, whereas the landlords' estates were to be taken over from their owners by the local government bodies. One of the main arguments of the Mensheviks in favour of this programme was that the peasants would never understand the transfer of peasant lands to anyone but the peasants. He who has studied the minutes of the Stockholm Congress will recall that this argument was particularly stressed by Maslov, who reported on the question, and Kostrov. It must not be forgotten—as is often done nowadays—that this was before the First

¹ I.e., the Russian Revolution of 1905-07.—Ed.

Duma, when there were still no concrete facts indicative of the character of the peasant movement and its strength. Everybody knew that Russia was in the fire of an agrarian revolution, but nobody knew how the agrarian movement would be organised, or under what slogans the peasant revolution would develop. There was no way of ascertaining to what extent that Congress represented the true, practical views of the peasants themselves. The arguments of the Mensheviks consequently carried a certain weight with many of the delegates. Shortly after our Stockholm Congress we received the first substantial indications as to how the peasant masses regarded this question. In both the First and the Second Dumas the peasants themselves introduced the "Bill of the 104." I made a special study of the signatories of this bill, I carefully familiarised myself with the opinions of the deputies, ascertained to what class they belonged and to what extent they could be called peasants. And in my book, which was burnt by the tsarist censorship, but which I shall nevertheless republish, I stated categorically that of the one hundred and four signatures the overwhelming majority are signatures of real peasants. That bill demanded the nationalisation of the land. The peasants wanted all land to be made the property of the state.

How, then, are we to explain the fact that in the Dumas, twice convened, the representatives of the peasantry of entire Russia preferred nationalisation to the measure proposed by the Mensheviks in both Dumas on behalf of the peasantry? The Mensheviks proposed that the peasants should retain their lands as their own property, and that only the landed estates should be transferred to the people; the peasants, on the contrary, maintained that all land should be transferred to the people. How can we account for this? The Socialist-Revolutionaries maintain that, owing to the prevalence of the "communal principle" in the villages, the Russian peasants are in sympathy with socialisation, with the labour-principle. But in all this phraseology there is not a single grain of common sense, it is all talk. As a matter of fact, the peasants came to this conclusion because the whole system of landownership in Russia, peasant and landlord, communal and homestead, was thoroughly permeated by antiquated, semi-feudal conditions;

and the peasants, from the point of view of the market, were obliged to demand the transfer of the land to the whole people. The peasants claim that the tangle of the old agrarian life can be disentangled only by nationalisation. Their point of view is bourgeois; by equal land tenure they mean the confiscation of the lands of the rich landlords, but not the equalisation of individual owners. By nationalisation they mean an active redistribution of the land. This is essentially a bourgeois project. Not one of the peasants mentioned equalisation, or socialisation, but what they all asserted was that it was impossible to wait any longer, that the land had to be "unenclosed"—in other words, that under twentieth century conditions it was impossible to retain the old forms of agriculture. There must not be varying forms of land-ownership. In this there is not the slightest suggestion of socialisation. This demand of the peasants is called equalisation because, as a brief summary of the statistics relating to land possession in 1905 shows, one landlord family held as much land as 300 peasant families, *viz.*, 2,000 dessiatins. In that sense it is, of course, equalisation, but it does not follow that the intention is to equalise the small peasant holdings. The Bill of the 104 indicates the very opposite.

That is the chief thing that must be said in scientific justification of the opinion that, from the bourgeois-democratic standpoint, nationalisation in Russia is essential. But it is essential also for the reason that it will be a powerful blow to private ownership in the means of production. To imagine that upon the abolition of private property in land everything in Russia will remain as of old is simply absurd.

The draft resolution goes on to draw practical conclusions and demands. Of the minor amendments, I shall mention the following: In point 1 of the resolution it is stated: "The party of the proletariat will with all its might support the immediate and entire confiscation of all landed estates. . . ." Instead of "support" we ought to say "fight for." Our view is not that the peasants have not enough land and that they need more. That is the stock opinion. We say that the landed estates are the basis of the oppression that is stifling the peasantry and retarding its development. The ques-

tion is not whether the peasants have too little land or not. Down with feudal oppression!—that is the way to put the matter from the standpoint of the revolutionary class struggle, although not from the standpoint of those bureaucrats who argue about how much land there is available and according to what standards it should be distributed. I propose to reverse the order of points 2 and 3, because the important thing for us is revolutionary initiative, of which the law must be the result. If you wait until a law is written, and do not yourselves develop revolutionary energy, you will have neither law nor land.

An objection often brought against nationalisation is that it requires a gigantic bureaucratic apparatus. That is true; but state ownership implies that every peasant is a tenant of the state, and that the transfer of leaseholds is prohibited. The question of how much and what kind of land the peasant shall lease is one entirely for settlement by a proper democratic, and not bureaucratic, body.

For “farm hands”¹ we substitute “agricultural workers.” Several comrades maintain that the word *batrak* is offensive; objections have been raised to this word. It should be removed.

We cannot now speak of proletarian-peasant committees or Soviets for the settlement of the land question, for, as we see, the peasants have created Soviets of Soldiers’ Deputies, and thus a differentiation between the proletariat and the peasantry has already been made.

As we know, the petty-bourgeois defencist parties² want to have the settlement of the land question postponed until the Constituent Assembly meets. We are for the immediate transfer of the land to the peasants, and for this being effected in the most organised manner possible. We are absolutely opposed to anarchistic seizures. You² propose that the peasants should enter into agreements with the landlords. We say that the land should be taken over immediately and sown, in order to avert famine and in order to save the country from the crash which is moving on us with such fearful rapidity. One cannot now accept the prescriptions of Shin-

¹ In Russian *batrak*.—Ed. Eng. ed.

² I.e., the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries.—Ed.

garev and the Cadets, who are proposing that we wait for the Constituent Assembly, the date of which is unknown, or that agreements be entered into with the landlords for the lease of the land. The peasants are already seizing the land without compensation, or paying only one-quarter of the rent.

One comrade has brought a local resolution from the Penza Gubernia, in which it is stated that the peasants are seizing the farm implements of the landlords, which however they are not dividing among the individual households, but are turning into public property. They are establishing a definite rotation and definite rules so as to cultivate the whole of the land with these implements. In resorting to such measures, they are guided by the desire to improve the methods of agricultural production. This fact is of tremendous and fundamental significance, despite the landlords and the capitalists, who are howling that this is anarchy. If you keep talking and howling that this is anarchy, and the peasants keep waiting, there will indeed be anarchy. The peasants are proving that they understand the economic conditions and public control better than the officials, and are applying it a hundred times more efficiently. Such a measure, easily realisable in a small village, will serve as an inevitable stimulus to more sweeping measures. If the peasant learns this—and he has begun to learn it—the knowledge of bourgeois professors will not be needed; he will himself come to the conclusion that it is essential that agricultural implements be utilised not only by small farms but also for the cultivation of the entire land. How they will do that is not important; whether they will combine their individual plots for common ploughing and sowing we do not know; and it does not matter if they do it in different ways. What does matter is that, fortunately, they are not faced with that large-number of petty-bourgeois intellectuals who style themselves Marxists and Social-Democrats, and who with important mien are advising the people that the time is not yet ripe for a socialist revolution, and that therefore the peasants must

not take the land. Fortunately, there are very few such gentlemen in the Russian villages. If the peasants contented themselves merely with taking the land on the basis of agreements with the landlords, but neglected to apply their experience collectively, failure would be inevitable; and the peasant committees would then become mere puppets, the game would end in a stalemate. That is why we propose to add point 8 to the resolution.

Since we know that the local peasants have themselves taken the initiative, it is our duty and obligation to declare that we support and recommend such initiative. That is the only guarantee that the revolution will not be limited to measures of a formal character, that the struggle against the crisis will not remain a mere subject for departmental discussion and for Shingarev epistles, but that the peasants will actually proceed in an organised way to fight famine and to increase output.

RESOLUTION ON THE AGRARIAN QUESTION

Adopted by the April All-Russian Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.

THE existence of the landed estates in Russia is the material stronghold of the power of the feudal landlords and is a pledge of the possibility of the restoration of the monarchy. This form of landownership inevitably condemns the overwhelming mass of the population of Russia, the peasantry, to poverty, bondage and oppression, and the entire country to backwardness in every sphere of life.

Peasant landownership in Russia, both as regards allotted land (communal and homestead) and private land (leased or purchased), is enmeshed from top to bottom, and all around, by old semi-feudal ties and relationships, *e.g.*, the division of the peasants into categories inherited from the time of serfdom, the system of divided holdings, and so forth. The necessity of breaking down these antiquated and injurious partitions, of "unenclosing" the land, and of reconstructing the system of landownership and agriculture so as to bring them into harmony with the new conditions of Russian and world economy, forms the material basis for the desire of the peasantry for the nationalisation of all the land in the state.

No matter in what petty-bourgeois utopias all Narodnik parties and groups envelop the struggle of the peasant masses against the feudal landed estates and against the feudal fetters which enmesh landownership and land tenure in Russia generally—in itself that struggle represents a bourgeois-democratic, an undoubtedly progressive, and an economically essential endeavour to break those fetters.

Nationalisation of the land, while it is a bourgeois measure,

provides the greatest amount of freedom for the class struggle and the greatest exemption of land tenure from non-bourgeois features conceivable in a capitalist society. Moreover, nationalisation of the land, representing as it does the abolition of private property in land, would in practice deal such a severe blow to private property in all means of production in general that the Party of the proletariat must assist such a reform in every possible way.

On the other hand, the well-to-do peasants of Russia have long ago produced the elements of a peasant bourgeoisie, and the Stolypin agrarian reform has undoubtedly strengthened, multiplied and fortified these elements. At the other pole of the village, the agricultural wage workers, the proletarians and the mass of semi-proletarian peasantry who are not far removed from proletarians, have likewise become strengthened and multiplied.

The more decided and consistent the break-up and elimination of the landed estates and the more decided, and consistent the bourgeois-democratic agrarian reform in Russia in general, the more vigorous and speedy will be the development of the class struggle of the agricultural proletariat against the rich peasantry (the peasant bourgeoisie).

It will depend on whether the urban proletariat succeeds in securing the following of the rural proletariat, together with the mass of rural semi-proletarians, or whether this mass follows the peasant bourgeoisie, which is inclining towards union with the Guchkovs and Milyukovs, with the capitalists and landlords and the counter-revolution in general—as to how the fate and issue of the Russian revolution will be determined, if the incipient proletarian revolution in Europe does not exercise a direct and powerful influence on our country.

In view of this class situation and this relation of forces, the Conference resolves that:

- 1) The Party of the proletariat will fight with all its might for the immediate and entire confiscation of all landed estates in Russia (and also appanage lands, church lands, tsar's lands, etc.);

2) The Party will vigorously advocate the immediate transfer of all lands to the peasantry organised into Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, or into other organs of local government, democratically elected and entirely independent of the landlords and officials;

3) The Party of the proletariat demands the nationalisation of all the land in the state; nationalisation, which signifies the transfer of the right of property in all land to the state, entrusts the right of administering the land to local democratic institutions.

4) The Party must, on the one hand, wage a determined struggle against the Provisional Government, which, both through the mouthpiece of Shingarev and by its collective utterances, is trying to induce the peasants to come to "voluntary agreements with the landlords," i.e., to impose upon them reforms which suit the interests of the landlords, and is threatening the peasants with punishment for "arrogation of power," which is a threat of violence on the part of a minority of the population (the landlords and capitalists) against the majority. On the other hand, the Party must wage a determined struggle against the petty-bourgeois vacillations of the majority of the Narodniki and the Menshevik Social-Democrats, who are advising the peasants to refrain from taking over the land pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly;

5) The Party recommends the peasants to take over the land in an organised way, so that not the slightest damage should be done to property, and also to take measures to increase production;

6) An agrarian reform can be successful and of abiding value only provided the whole state is democratised, i.e., provided, on the one hand, that the police, the standing army and the actually privileged bureaucracy have been abolished, and, on the other, that there exists a comprehensive system of local government exempt from supervision and tutelage from above;

7) The separate and independent organisation of the agricultural proletariat must be undertaken immediately and uni-

versally, both in the form of Soviets of Agricultural Workers' Deputies (as well as of separate Soviets of deputies from the semi-proletarian peasantry), and in the form of proletarian groups or fractions within the general Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, within all local and municipal government bodies, etc.;

8) The Party must support the initiative of those peasant committees which in a number of localities in Russia are handing over the livestock and implements of the landlords to the peasantry organised by those committees, for the purpose of their socially regulated employment in the cultivation of all the land;

9) The Party of the proletariat must advise the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians to strive to organise on all landed estates fair-sized model farms to be conducted for the public account by the Soviets of Agricultural Workers' Deputies under the direction of agricultural experts and with the application of the best machinery.

May 7-12 (April 24-29), 1917

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE AGRARIAN QUESTION

*Proposed to the First All-Russian Congress of
Peasants' Deputies*

1) All landed estates and privately owned lands, as well as appanages, church lands, etc., must be turned over immediately to the people without compensation.

2) The peasantry must in an organised manner, through their Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, immediately take over all the lands in their localities, for the purpose of their economic exploitation, without however in any way prejudicing the final settlement of agrarian relations by the Constituent Assembly or by an All-Russian Council of Soviets, should the people decide to entrust the central power of the state to such a Council of Soviets.

3) Private property in land generally must be abolished, i.e., the ownership of the whole land shall be vested solely in the whole people, while the disposal of the land shall be entrusted to the local democratic institutions.

4) The peasants must reject the advice of the capitalists and landlords and of their Provisional Government to come to "an agreement" with the landlords in each locality as to the immediate disposal of the land; the disposal of the land must be determined by the organised will of the majority of the local peasants, and not by an agreement between the majority, i.e., the peasants, and the minority, and an insignificant minority at that, i.e., the landlords.

5) Not only the landlords are resisting, and will continue to resist with every means at their disposal, the transfer of the landed estates to the peasants without compensation, but also the capitalists, who wield tremendous monetary power and exercise great influence on the unenlightened masses through the news-

papers, the numerous officials accustomed to the domination of capital, etc. Hence, the transfer without compensation of the landed estates to the peasantry cannot be effected completely or permanently unless the confidence of the peasant masses in the capitalists is undermined, unless a close alliance between the peasantry and the city workers is established, and unless the state power is completely transferred to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants' and other Deputies. Only a state power which is in the hands of such Soviets, and which governs the state not through a police, or a bureaucracy, or a standing army alienated from the people, but through a national, universal and armed militia of workers and peasants, can guarantee the realisation of the above-mentioned agrarian reforms, which are being demanded by the entire peasantry.

6) Agricultural wage workers and poor peasants, *i.e.*, such as for the lack of sufficient land, cattle and implements secure their livelihood partly by selling their labour, must make every effort to organise themselves independently into separate Soviets, or into separate groups within the general Peasants' Soviets, in order that they may be in a position to defend their interests against the rich peasants, who will inevitably strive to form an alliance with the capitalists and landlords.

7) As a result of the war, Russia, like all the other belligerent countries, as well as many neutral countries, is being threatened by economic disruption, disaster and famine because of the lack of hands, coal, iron, etc. Only if the Workers' and Peasants' Deputies assume control and supervision over the production and distribution of goods can the country be saved. It is therefore necessary to proceed immediately to arrange agreements between Soviets of Peasants' Deputies and Soviets of Workers' Deputies regarding the exchange of grain and other rural products for implements, shoes, clothing, etc., without the intermediary of the capitalists, who must be removed from the management of the factories. With the same purpose in view, the peasants' committees must be encouraged to take over the livestock and implements of the landlords, such livestock and implements to be used

in common. Similarly, the transformation of all large private estates into model farms must be encouraged, the land to be cultivated collectively with the aid of the best implements under the direction of agricultural experts and in accordance with the decisions of the local Soviets of Agricultural Workers' Deputies.

Beginning of June (end of May) 1917

SPEECH ON THE AGRARIAN QUESTION

*Delivered at the First All-Russian Congress of Peasants' Deputies,
June 4 (May 22), 1917*

COMRADES, the resolution which I have the honour of submitting to your attention in the name of the Social-Democratic fraction of the Peasants' Soviet has been printed and distributed to the delegates. If not all have received copies, we shall see to it that an additional number are printed tomorrow for distribution to all desirous of having it.

In a short speech I can of course take up only the main, the principal problems, those which interest the peasantry and the working class most. To those who are interested in the question in greater detail I would recommend the resolution of our Party, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks), which was published as a supplement to No. 13 of the newspaper *Soldatskaya Pravda* and repeatedly commented upon in our paper, *Pravda*. At present I shall have to limit myself to an examination of the most important, most controversial, or most misunderstood points of my resolution and of the programme of our Party on the agrarian question. One such controversial or misunderstood point is the question touched upon at yesterday's or the day before yesterday's session of the Chief Land Committee, of which you all probably heard or read in yesterday's or the day before yesterday's papers. There was present at the session of the Chief Land Committee one of the representatives of our Party, a colleague of mine on the Central Committee, Comrade Smilga. Comrade Smilga introduced a motion at the session to the effect that the Chief Land Committee should express itself in favour of the immediate and organised seizure by the peasantry of the

landed estates. Many objections against this motion were showered upon Comrade Smilga. [*Voice: And here, too.*] I am told that here too many comrades will oppose this motion. The more reason, therefore, why I should give an explanation of this point of our programme, for it seems to me that the greater part of the objections to our programme are based either on a misunderstanding or on a misinterpretation of our views.

What do all the resolutions of our Party, all the articles in our organ, in our paper, *Pravda*, say? We say that the whole land, without exception, must become the property of the whole people. We arrived at this conclusion on the basis of a study, particularly, of the peasant movement of 1905 and the declarations of the peasant deputies in the First and Second State Dumas, where many peasant deputies from all parts of Russia could express themselves with comparative freedom—only comparative, of course.

The whole land must become the property of the whole people. From this it follows that, while we stand for the immediate transfer of the landed estates to the local peasants, without compensation, we by no means favour the seizure of these lands as private property, and in no case do we favour the partition of these lands. We say that the land must be taken for a single sowing by the local peasantry upon the decision of a majority of the local and peasant delegates. We do not advocate that the land should become the property of the peasants who are now taking it for a single sowing. All such objections to our proposal, which I have continually come across and read of in the columns of the capitalist papers, are simply based upon a false interpretation of our views. Since we declare—and I repeat we have declared it in all our resolutions—that the land must become the property of the whole people and pass to them without compensation, it is obvious that the settlement of the final distribution of the land and the final settlement of agrarian relations is a matter solely for the central state power, *i.e.*, for the Constituent Assembly, or for the All-Russian Council of Soviets, if such a power, a Council of Soviets, were to be created by the peasant and worker masses. There are no differences of opinion on this score.

The differences of opinion begin when it is objected that, if that is the case, then the immediate transfer of the landed estates to the peasantry without compensation will be an arbitrary arrogation of power. This view, which was expressed with great precision, authority and weight by the Minister for Agriculture, Shingarev, in his well-known telegram, we consider in the highest degree erroneous and detrimental to the peasantry, detrimental to the tillers of the land, detrimental from the point of view of providing the country with bread, and unjust. I take the liberty of reading this telegram in order to show what it is we most object to:

"An independent solution of the land question in the absence of a general state law cannot be tolerated. Arrogation of power will lead to a national calamity . . . the settlement of the land question by law is a matter for the Constituent Assembly. In the meantime, Agrarian Conciliation Boards have been set up in the localities in connection with the volost Committees of Supply, consisting of tillers and owners of the land."

This is the most salient passage in the government's declaration on this question. If you acquaint yourself with the resolution adopted yesterday or the day before yesterday by the Chief Land Committee on this question, with the resolution which was also recently adopted by a conference of members of the State Duma, you will see that both resolutions proceed from one and the same point of view. They accuse the peasants who desire the immediate transfer of the land to the local peasant committees without compensation of arrogation of power. They proceed from the view that only a voluntary agreement between the peasants and the land-owners, between the tillers of the land and the owners of the land, is compatible with the general needs and interests of the state. That is what we deny, that is what we contest.

Let us analyse the objections to our proposal. The usual objections are that land in Russia is distributed very unequally, both among the various small units, such as the villages and volosts, and among the various large units, such as the gubernias and oblasts.¹ It is said that if the local population, by their own majority

¹ *Oblast*—a region.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

decision, were to take the land into their own hands without reckoning with the will of the landlords, and, furthermore, without compensation, the inequality of distribution would remain, and that there would even be danger of its perpetuation. We reply that this argument is based on a misconception. Unequal distribution of the land will remain in any case, until such time as the Constituent Assembly, or whatever the central power may be, finally establishes a new system. Pending the establishment of this system, no matter whether the question be settled as the peasant wishes or as the landlord wishes; whether it be settled as we want it, *i.e.*, by the immediate transfer of the land to the peasants, or as the landlords want it, who are prepared to lease out the land at high rentals on condition that both the peasant tenant and the landlord retain their rights—in any case, unequal distribution will remain. This objection is obviously incorrect and unjust. We say that it is necessary as quickly as possible to create a central state power which will not only be based upon the will and decision of the majority of the peasants, but will also directly express the opinion of that majority. There is no difference of opinion on that score. When we hear the objections levelled against the Bolsheviks, the attacks upon them by the capitalist papers, the allegation that we are anarchists, we repudiate all this most categorically and regard such attacks as a dissemination of malicious lies and calumnies.

Anarchists are people who deny that a state power is necessary; whereas we say that a state power is absolutely essential; and essential not only for Russia now, but for every state, even if it were directly passing to socialism. A strong state power is absolutely essential! All we desire is that this power shall be entirely and exclusively in the hands of the majority of workers', soldiers', and peasants' deputies. That is wherein we differ from other parties. We do not deny that a strong state power is necessary; what we say, however, is that all landed estates must be transferred to the peasants without compensation, upon the decision of the local peasant committees, adopted by a majority, and on condition that no damage be done to property. This is stated in our resolu-

tion in the most explicit manner. We vigorously repudiate the objection that our view amounts to an arbitrary arrogation of power.

No, in our opinion it is an arrogation of power for the landlords to retain the land for their own benefit, or exact rent for it; but for a majority of the peasantry to declare that the landlords shall not be allowed to retain their estates, that the peasants for long decades, nay, centuries, have experienced nothing but oppression from the landlords, is not arrogation of power: that is a restoration of rights, and a restoration of rights must not be delayed. It is true that if the land passes to the peasants now, inequality between the various regions will not be eliminated. But nobody can do away with this inequality until the Constituent Assembly convenes. If we were to ask Shingarev, who objects to our views and in official documents abuses the adherents of our views for "arrogation of power," for his remedy for this inequality, he would not be able to answer. He offers no remedy, and has none to offer.

He advocates "voluntary agreements between the peasants and the landlords." What does that mean? I will cite two basic figures concerning landownership in European Russia. These figures show that at one pole of Russian rural life we have extremely rich landlords, among them the Romanovs, the richest and most pernicious of landlords, and at the other end extremely poor peasants. I will cite two figures, so that you may understand the significance of the preaching of Shingarev and of the landlords and capitalists. These are the two figures: if we take the richest landlords in European Russia, we find that the largest, who number less than 30,000, possess about 70,000,000 dessiatins of land. This amounts to an average of 2,000 dessiatins each. If we take the upper strata of rich Russian landlords, without distinction of social rank (the majority of them are nobles, but there are also others), we find they number 30,000 and own 70,000,000 dessiatins! And if we take the poor peasants, we find that, according to the same census of 1905, which offers the latest data collected throughout Russia uniformly—data which as a matter of fact do not deserve much credence, like all statistics collected

under the tsar by tsarist officials, but which nevertheless provide the only figures approximating to the truth and suitable for comparative purposes—if we take the poor peasantry, we find that there are 10,000,000 households possessing altogether from 70,000,000 to 75,000,000 dessiatins. In other words, the one has over 2,000 dessiatins, whereas the other has $7\frac{1}{2}$ dessiatins per household! And still they say that it would be arrogation of power were the peasants to refuse to conclude voluntary agreements! What does “voluntary agreement” mean? It means that the land-owners will perhaps lease the land for a good rental, but will not surrender it to anybody for nothing. Is that just? No, it is not just. Is that advantageous to the peasant population? No, it is not. How ownership in land will be finally determined is a matter for the future central power to decide, but in the meantime the landed estates must pass into the hands of the peasantry by organised seizure without compensation. Minister Chernov, arguing in the Chief Land Committee against my comrade, Smilga, said that the two words “organised seizure” are mutually contradictory: for if it is seizure, it cannot be organised, and if it is organised, it cannot be seizure. I think that this criticism is incorrect. I think that if the peasantry adopt a decision by a majority in any village or volost, in any uyezd¹ or gubernia—and in some gubernias, if not in all, the peasant congresses have established a government power in the localities that represents the interests and the will of the majority, the will of the population, *i.e.*, of the majority of the tillers of the soil—if the peasants create such a government power locally, then its decision will be the decision of the power they recognise. It will be the power for which the local peasant population cannot but entertain full respect. Let the peasant know that he is taking the landlord’s land; if he pays for it, let him pay into the uyezd peasants’ fund; let him know that this money will go to improve agriculture, to pave roads, lay new roads, etc. Let him know that he is taking not his own land, and not the landlord’s land, but the land of the whole people, the disposal of which will finally be decided by the Constituent Assembly. That is why from the very beginning of the revolution, from the creation of the

¹ Uyezd—an administrative unit, part of a gubernia.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

first Land Committee, the landlord must forfeit every right to the land; nor must any monetary payments be made for the land.

The fundamental difference between us and our opponents lies in our conception of what constitutes good order and what constitutes law. Hitherto, the view was that good order and law is that which is convenient for the landlords and the officials, while we assert that good order and law is that which is convenient for the majority of the peasantry! Until there is an All-Russian Council of Soviets or a Constituent Assembly, every local authority, be it the uyezd committees or the gubernia committees, is the supreme order and law! We regard it as an arrogation of power when one landlord, on the basis of century-old privileges, can demand a "voluntary" agreement with three hundred peasant families, each of which has on the average $7\frac{1}{2}$ dessiatins of land! We say: "Let decisions be adopted by a majority; we want the peasants to get the landed estates now, without delaying a single month, a single week, or a single day!"

It is objected: "If the peasantry seize the land now, then in all likelihood it will be seized by the more prosperous, who possess cattle, implements, etc. Will that not be dangerous from the point of view of the poor peasantry?" Comrades, I must dwell on this objection because our Party, in all its decisions, programmes and manifestoes to the people declares: "We are a party of wage workers and poor peasants; we desire to safeguard their interests; through them, and through them alone, through these classes, can humanity escape the horrors into which it has been precipitated by this war of the capitalists."

That is why we are very attentive to objections which claim that our decisions do not correspond to the interests of the poor peasants, and invite particular attention towards them, because these objections go to the very heart, the very root of the matter. The point of the matter is: how can and should the interests of the wage workers of town and country, and the interests of the poor peasants, be defended in the developing revolution against the interests of the landlords and the rich peasants, who are also capitalists? This, of course, is the crux of the matter, the very essence of the matter! And it is objected that if we advise the

peasants to seize the land immediately it will be seized first of all by those who possess implements and cattle, while the poor will remain empty-handed. Well, I ask you, will voluntary agreement with the landlords help?

You know perfectly well that landlords are not eager to lease their land to peasants who have not a penny to their name, and that, on the contrary, they will resort to "voluntary" agreements when they see a prospect of securing a good rental. Somehow, landlords hitherto have never given away their land for nothing; so far as I know, nobody has ever observed anything like that in Russia.

Voluntary agreements with the landlords imply that the privileged and favoured position and advantages of the rich peasants will be still more enhanced, extended and strengthened; for they are most likely to be able to pay the landlord; for the rich peasant is a solvent person in the eyes of the landlord. The landlord knows that he can pay, that the rent can be collected from him, and therefore in such "voluntary" deals with the landlords the rich peasants have certainly more to gain than the poor peasants. On the contrary, if there is any way of helping the poor peasant at once, it is only by the measure I propose, namely, that the land should be immediately handed over to the peasants without compensation.

Landed proprietorship has always been and always will be a supreme injustice. The possession of the land by the peasants without compensation, if it is done by a majority, will be not an arbitrary arrogation of power, but a restoration of a right. That is how we regard the matter, and that is why we regard as a great injustice the argument that the poor peasant will suffer. It is called a "voluntary" agreement, it requires a Shingarev to call it a "voluntary" agreement when one landlord possesses 2,000 dessiatins, while three hundred peasants on an average possess $7\frac{1}{2}$ dessiatins each. To call such an agreement voluntary is to mock at the peasant. It is not a voluntary agreement, but a compulsory agreement for the peasant, and will be compulsory until such time as every velost, gubernia, uyezd and All-Russian Peasant Soviet declares that the private property of the landlord

is a supreme injustice, the abolition of which must not be deferred a single hour or a single minute.

Property in land must belong to the whole people, and its establishment is the task of the central state government. As long as that government has not assembled, the local authorities, I repeat, must take over the landed estates, and this they must do by a majority decision and in an organised way. It is not true that disorder reigns in Russia, as the papers assert! It is not true: in the villages greater order now prevails than was the case before, for decisions are being arrived at by a majority vote; there has been practically no violence committed against the landlords; cases of injustice and violence against the landlords are extremely rare; in fact, their number is insignificant, and, taking Russia as a whole, hardly exceeds the number of cases of violence that have always occurred.

Let me now touch upon another argument which I have had occasion to hear and which I examined in our paper, *Pravda*, in connection with the question of the immediate transfer of the land to the peasantry.¹

The argument is that if the peasant is advised to take over the landed estates immediately and without compensation, the result will be dissatisfaction, irritation, suspicion and even resentment among the soldiers at the front, who may say: "If the peasants take the land now, while we are at the front, we shall be left without land." The soldiers might quit the front, and chaos and anarchy would ensue. To which we reply that this objection has nothing to do with the main question; for in either case, whether the land is taken for payment by agreement with the landlords, or by a decision of a majority of the peasantry, the soldiers will remain at the front as long as the war lasts; of course they will remain at the front and cannot return to their villages. Why should the soldiers at the front not fear that the landlords, under the guise of a voluntary agreement, may impose unfavourable conditions, and why should they fear what the peas-

¹ In the article entitled "On the 'Unauthorised Seizure' of Land," which appeared in *Pravda* of June 2 (May 20), 1917 (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XX).—Ed.

antry decide by a majority vote against the landlords? Incomprehensible! Why do you think that the soldier at the front will have confidence in the landlord and in a "voluntary" agreement with the landlord? I can understand this being said by the landlord and capitalist parties, but that this should be the view of the Russian soldier at the front I cannot believe. If there is to be a "voluntary" agreement with the landlord, the soldier will not regard that as good order, he will have no confidence in it; he will rather be inclined to think that the old disorder of landlord rule is continuing.

The soldier will have more confidence if he is told that the land is being transferred to the people, that the local peasants will rent it and will not pay the landlord, but will pay their contributions to their committee, to be used for the common welfare and for the benefit of the soldier at the front, and not to the landlord. If this is decided by a majority, the soldier at the front will know that there will be no more "voluntary" agreements with the landlords, but that the landlords are citizens with the same rights as others, and that nobody wishes to injure them. The land will belong to the whole people: that means that it will belong also to the landlord; not, however, on the basis of the privileges of nobility, but in the same way as it belongs to every citizen. There must be no privileges for the landowners from the day of the overthrow of the power of the tsar, who was the largest landlord and oppressor of the masses. From the moment freedom was established the power of the landlords must be regarded as overthrown once and for all. The soldier at the front will lose nothing from this point of view; on the contrary, he will have greater confidence in the state power and a calm assurance for the fate of his home, knowing that his family will not be allowed to suffer, nor will they remain uncared for.

There remains one more argument that is levelled against our proposal. The argument is that if the peasants were to seize the landlords' estates immediately the result of a seizure effected so precipitately and with so little preparation might be that the tillage and sowing of the land might suffer. I must say that the power of the majority, a central state power, has not yet been

created; the peasants have not yet acquired sufficient confidence in themselves, and have not yet lost confidence in the landlords and capitalists. I think that we are approaching nearer to this every day, that every day the peasants are losing confidence in the old state power and are beginning to realise that the government in Russia must consist of the elected deputies of the peasants, soldiers and workers, and nobody else. I think that we are approaching nearer to this every day not because certain parties are advising it; for millions of people will never hearken to the advice of parties if that advice does not coincide with what they are learning from their own experience. We are rapidly approaching the time when there will be no power in Russia except that of the elected deputies of the peasants and workers. And when I am told that the immediate seizure of the land may lead to poor cultivation, to poor sowing, I must admit that our peasant, owing to his downtrodden condition and the age-long oppression of the landlords, cultivates his land very poorly. Of course, a terrible crisis is reigning in Russia, as in all the belligerent countries; and there can be no salvation for Russia unless the land is better cultivated and the greatest economy in human labour is observed. But can "voluntary" agreements with the landlords change anything now, in this first sowing? Why, will the landlords see to it that the land is better cultivated, or will the peasants sow the land worse if they know that they are sowing not the landlord's land but the land of the whole people, that they are not paying the landlord, but are paying into their own peasants' funds? That is such nonsense that I am always astonished to hear such arguments. It is utterly incredible and is nothing but a ruse on the part of the landlords.

The landlords have come to understand that they cannot rule by the whip any longer. They understand that very well now and are adopting a method of ruling which is a novelty for Russia, but which has long existed in Western Europe. That it is impossible to rule by the whip any longer has been shown in our country by two revolutions, whereas in Western Europe it has been shown by dozens of revolutions. These revolutions serve as lessons to the landlords and capitalists; they teach them that the people must be

ruled by deceit and flattery; they teach them that they must adapt themselves, attach a red badge to their coats, and, although they may be parasites, declare: "We are revolutionary democrats; just wait a little, please, and we shall do everything for you." To argue that the peasants will sow their land worse if they sow not the landlords' but the people's land is to make game of the peasants and is an attempt to retain domination over them by fraud.

I repeat, there must be no landed estates at all. Possession is not necessarily ownership; possession is a temporary measure and changes from year to year. A peasant who rents a piece of land will not dare to regard it as his own. The land is not his and not the landlord's, but the people's. I repeat, the sowing of the fields this year, this spring, cannot suffer because of this fact. The suggestion is so monstrous, so incredible, that all I can say is this: Beware of the landlords, do not trust them, do not allow yourselves to be deceived by cajoling and promises. Remember that a decision of a majority of the peasants, who are very cautious in their decisions, is a lawful decision and a decision of the state. One may rely on the peasants in this respect. For instance; I have in my possession a decision of the Penza peasants, which from the first point to the last is permeated by a spirit of extreme caution; the peasants are not undertaking an immediate reform for the whole of Russia, but they do not want to be driven into intolerable bondage; and they are right. The greatest bondage was bondage to the landlords and it still is bondage to those who own the land, to the oppressors. Therefore the abolition of this bondage must not be deferred for a single week, or for a single hour. But every seizure must be an organised seizure, it must not be made for the sake of private property, for the sake of division, but solely for the sake of the common use of the common land of the people.

I might finish with this question of seizure by replying that on the part of the landlords and capitalists the objections to our proposal are based on fraud, while on the part of the non-landlords and non-capitalists, on the part of those who desire to protect the interests of the toilers, they are based on misunderstanding and on excessive confidence in what the capitalists and the landlords

falsely say of us. When our arguments are examined you will find that the just demand for the immediate abolition of the landed estates, as well as for the transfer of ownership of the land to the people, cannot be realised until the central state power assembles; but that we most emphatically recommend the immediate transfer of the possession of the land in the various localities to the peasants, on the understanding that not the slightest violation of order shall be permitted. We make this recommendation in our resolutions; it may be superfluous, for the peasants are putting it into practice in any case.

I now pass to the second question, one requiring particular attention, namely, what would be the most desirable and best way, in the interests of the toiling masses, to deal with the land when it has become the property of the whole people, when private ownership has been abolished? That hour in Russia is close at hand. For indeed the power of the landlords has been undermined, if not destroyed. What is to be done when the land is in the possession of all the peasants and when there are no landlords? How is the land to be divided? It seems to me that we must establish a general point of view on this question, since, of course, the disposal of the land will locally always be in the hands of the peasants. It cannot be otherwise in a democratic state. This is so obvious that it is superfluous to discuss it. But when it is asked what must be done so that the land shall be enjoyed by the toilers, we say that our desire is to protect the interests of the wage workers and the poor peasants. This is what our Party of Russian Bolshevik Social-Democrats considers to be its duty. When it is said that the land will be transferred to the people, we ask whether this is the same as saying that the land will be transferred to the toilers. And we reply: No, it is not the same! When it is said that the land will be transferred to the people, it means that the private property of the landlords will be abolished; it means that the whole land will belong to the whole people; it means that everyone who takes land takes it on lease from the whole people. If such a system is established, it will mean that all differences in forms of land possession will disappear, that all land will be on the same plane, or, as the peasants often say, that all the old partitions and fences

will be removed; the land will become "unenclosed"; there will be free land and free labour.

Does that mean that the land is transferred to all the toilers? No, it does not. Free labour on free land means that all the old forms of landownership have been abolished; that there is no property in land except that of the state as a whole; that everybody rents his land from the state; that there is a general state power, the power of all the workers and peasants; that the peasant alone rents land from this power, as a tenant; that there are no middlemen between the state and the peasant; that everybody rents land on an equal footing. That is what is meant by free labour on free land.

Does that mean that the land is transferred to all the toilers? No, it does not. You cannot eat land; and in order to farm it implements, cattle, farm adjuncts and money are required; without money and without implements one cannot farm. Hence, when you establish a system of free labour on free land, there will be no landlordism, there will be no categories on the land. The land will be the property of the whole people, and free tenants will rent land from the state. When you establish that, it will not mean that the land has been transferred to all the toilers; it will only mean that every farmer will freely make use of the land; whoever desires it will freely take land from the state. In comparison with tsarist landlord Russia, that will be a great advance. It will be a great advance, because in landlord and tsarist Russia 70,000,000 dessiatins of land were in the hands of 30,000 Markovs, Romanovs, and similar landlords, whereas in this new Russia there will be free labour on free land. This has already been accomplished in many localities. Russia has already progressed as compared with tsarist and landlord Russia. However, that does not mean the transfer of the land to the toilers; it means the transfer of the land to the farmer. For it is not enough that the land should belong to the whole state, and that it should be taken by those who wish to farm it. The desire to farm alone is not enough; ability is required, and even ability is not enough. Every agricultural labourer and every peasant has the ability; but he has not the necessary cattle, implements, capital. Hence, no matter what you

resolve, and no matter what you say, we shall not in this way establish free labour on free land. Even were we to post written announcements in every volost administration to the effect that the land is free, it would no more improve matters for the toilers than the prisons in West European republics cease to be prisons because they bear the device "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity." Were we to inscribe the legend "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" on a factory, as is done in America, the factory would not thereby cease to be hell for the workers and paradise for the capitalists.

It follows that we must now think of the next step, namely, to secure something more than free labour, which is a forward step, but which is not yet a step towards safeguarding the interests of the toilers. It is a step towards emancipation from the rapacity of the landlords, from exploitation by the landlords, towards emancipation from the Markovs, from the police, and so forth; but it is not a step towards safeguarding the interests of the toilers, since without cattle, without implements, and without capital the poor and propertyless peasant cannot take advantage of the land. That is why I am very sceptical regarding the proposal for two standards, for two measures, the labour standard and the food standard. I know that the Narodnik parties are always arguing and explaining these standards. I know that these parties consider it necessary to establish these two standards, these two measures: the labour standard, *i.e.*, the maximum amount of land a family can cultivate, and the food standard, *i.e.*, the amount of land possession of less than which would mean starvation. I say that I am sceptical on this question of standards or measures; I consider it a bureaucratic plan, which can bring no good, which cannot be realised, even were you to decide upon that plan here. That is the crux of the matter. That plan can bring no appreciable relief to the wage workers and poor peasants. As long as capitalism rules, that plan, even were you to accept it, would remain a paper plan. That plan will not help us find the right way for the transition from capitalism to socialism.

When people speak of these two measures, these two standards, it is as though they imagined that only land and citizens exist; that nothing else in the world exists. If that were so, the plan would

be a good one. But that is not the case. There is also the power of capital, the power of money. Without money there can be no husbandry, even on the freest land and with any "standards" you like. For as long as there is money there will be wage labour. And that means that the rich peasants, of whom there are no less than a million families in Russia, will oppress and exploit the wage workers, and will oppress them even on "free" land. These rich peasants constantly—not by way of exception, but as a general rule—resort to hiring labourers, by the year, by the season or by the day; that is, they exploit the poor peasants, the proletarians. And side by side with this, there are millions and millions of horseless peasants who cannot exist unless they sell their labour power, unless they resort to an outside trade, and so forth. As long as the power of money remains, no matter what "standards" are established, they will at best be unfit for practical application because they do not reckon with that important factor, namely, that property in implements, cattle and money is distributed unevenly. They do not reckon with the fact that wage labour exists, and that it is subject to exploitation. That is a fundamental factor in the life of present-day Russia, and it cannot be circumvented. And no matter what "standards" we established, they would be circumvented in practice, they would remain "standards" only on paper. That is why in order to safeguard the interests of the propertyless and poor peasants in this supreme reform of Russia which you are now undertaking, which you will undoubtedly succeed in carrying through, and in which private property in land will be abolished and a step will be taken towards bringing nearer a better future, a socialist future—in this supreme reform, which you are only just beginning, but which will go very far, for there is no force that can stop it, in order to safeguard the interests of the workers and the poor peasants one cannot adopt the method of standards and measures. A different method must be sought.

I and my comrades in the Party, on whose behalf I have the honour of speaking, know only two such methods of safeguarding the interests of the agricultural wage workers and the poor peasants. Those two ways we submit to the attention of the Peasants' Soviet.

The first way is to organise the agricultural wage workers and poor peasants. We desire and recommend that in every peasant committee, in every volost, uyezd and gubernia, there be formed a separate fraction, or a separate group, of agricultural wage workers and poor peasants, of such as should ask themselves: If the land tomorrow becomes the property of the whole people—and it will become so inevitably, because that is the will of the people—what shall we do? We who have no cattle or implements, where shall we obtain them? How shall we till the land? How shall we protect our interests? How shall we see to it that the land, when it becomes the property of the whole people, shall not fall into the hands of the masters only? If it falls into the hands of those who have sufficient cattle and implements, shall we have gained much thereby? Is it for that we accomplished this great change? Is that what we needed?

The land will belong to the "people." But that is not enough to protect the interests of the agricultural wage workers. The principal method is not to establish here, from above, or through a peasant committee, a "standard" of the amount of land to be held by isolated individuals. Such measures will be of no avail as long as capital rules; they will not save us from the rule of capitalism. In order to escape from the yoke of capitalism, in order that the land of the whole people shall pass to the toilers, there is only one basic method, namely, to organise the agricultural wage workers, who will be guided by their experience, by their observations, by their distrust of what the exploiters tell them, even though the latter deck themselves out in red favours and style themselves "revolutionary democrats."

The poor peasants will learn only by their independent organisation locally, and from their own experience. And that experience will be no easy one. We cannot and do not promise rivers flowing with milk and honey. No, the landlords will be overthrown, because such is the will of the people; but capitalism will remain. Its overthrow will be far more difficult, its overthrow will be reached by a different road. That road is the separate and independent organisation of the agricultural wage workers and poor peasants.

This is what our Party proposes in the first place. That road alone gives expectation of the gradual, difficult, but certain transfer of the land to the actual toilers.

The second step recommended by our Party is that every large farm, for instance every large landed estate, of which there are 30,000 in Russia, shall be transformed as quickly as possible into a model farm, to be worked jointly by agricultural workers and trained agriculturists, and with the application of the cattle, implements, etc., of the landlord. Unless such joint cultivation is undertaken, under the guidance of the Soviets of Agricultural Workers, we shall not obtain the transfer of the land to the toilers. Of course, joint cultivation is a difficult thing, and of course if anybody imagined that such joint cultivation can be decreed and imposed from above, it would be sheer madness; since the age-long predilection for individual husbandry cannot disappear at once; since money is required for such a purpose; and since adaptation to the new foundations of life is demanded. Were this counsel, this opinion concerning joint cultivation, common farm stock, and common cattle, with the application of the best implements and in common with agricultural experts—were this counsel but the invention of parties, the matter would be hopeless. For changes in the life of a people are never accomplished by the advice of a party, and because tens of millions of people do not undertake a revolution on the mere advice of parties. And such a change will be far more of a revolution than the overthrow of the imbecile Nicholas Romanov. I repeat, tens of millions of people do not undertake a revolution to order. They do so when privation has become desperate, when the condition of the people has become intolerable, and when the general pressure and determination of tens of millions of people shatter all the old partitions and are truly able to create a new life. When we recommend this measure, recommend that it be undertaken with caution, and declare that it is becoming essential, we have not deduced it from our programme, from our socialist doctrine, but have reached that conclusion because we are Socialists and have studied the life of the West European peoples. We know that many revolutions have taken place there, resulting in the creation of democratic republics. We know that in America in

1865 the slave-owners were defeated, and that thereupon hundreds of millions of acres of land were distributed among the peasants free of charge, or almost free of charge; nevertheless capitalism dominates there as nowhere else, and is oppressing the toiling masses as much as, if not more than, in other countries. It is this socialist doctrine and these observations of other peoples that have led us to the firm conviction that unless the land is cultivated in common by the agricultural workers, with the application of the best machinery and under the guidance of scientifically trained agriculturists, there can be no escape from the yoke of capitalism. Were we, however, to confine ourselves solely to the experience of the West European states, our cause in Russia would be in a bad way, because the Russian people in the mass are capable of taking a real step along the new road only in case of dire necessity. And we say that the time has come when dire necessity is knocking at the door of the entire Russian people. This dire necessity consists in the fact that it is impossible to continue farming in the old way. If we continue, as of old, on our small farms, even as free citizens on free land, we shall still be faced with inevitable ruin, for economic chaos is looming larger every day and every hour. Everybody is saying that it is a fact—a fact that is the result not of the malice of individual persons, but of the World War of conquest, the result of capitalism.

The war has destroyed masses of people; the whole world is drenched in blood; the whole world has been brought to the brink of ruin by the war. This is no exaggeration. Nobody can vouch for the coming day. Everybody admits that. Take the *Izvestiya* of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies; everybody says there that the capitalists are resorting to sabotage and lockouts. That means that there is no work, and the capitalists are discharging workers wholesale. That is what this criminal war has led to, and not in Russia alone, but in all countries.

And that is why we say that individual husbandry on individual plots, even though it be "free labour on free land," offers no way out of the terrible crisis, and no escape from universal destruction. Universal labour service is required, and the greatest economy in the utilisation of human labour. An unusually strong and firm

government power is needed, one capable of carrying universal labour service into effect. It cannot be carried into effect by state officials; it can be carried into effect only by Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, because they are the people themselves, they are the mass of the people; because they are not a bureaucratic power; because, knowing peasant life from top to bottom, they can establish labour service, and can establish safeguards for human labour so that the labour of the peasants will not be dissipated, and the transition to joint cultivation will thus be accomplished gradually and circumspectly. It is a difficult task, but it is essential to adopt joint cultivation on large model farms. Without that there can be no escape from the chaos and no way out of the truly desperate condition in which Russia finds herself. It would be the greatest error to think that a reform of such colossal proportions can be effected at one stroke. No, it demands tremendous labour, it demands the effort, determination and energy of every single peasant and worker, each in his locality and at the work he knows best, in the branch of production he has been pursuing for many years. Such a thing cannot be accomplished to order; but accomplished it must be: because the predatory war has brought the whole of humanity to the brink of ruin, because tens of millions of people have perished, and many more will perish, in this frightful war, if we do not strain every effort, if all organisations of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies do not take common vigorous action for the joint cultivation of the land without capitalists and without landlords. This path alone will lead to the actual transfer of the land to the toilers.

ON THE NECESSITY OF FOUNDING AN AGRICULTURAL WORKERS' UNION IN RUSSIA

FIRST ARTICLE

ONE exceedingly important question must be submitted to the All-Russian Conference of Trade Unions now in session in Petrograd. It is the question of forming an All-Russian Union of *Agricultural Workers*.

Every class of Russia is organising. Yet the class that is most exploited in Russia, that lives most poorly, that is most divided and most downtrodden—the class of agricultural wage workers—has, it would seem, been overlooked. Organisations of agricultural wage workers exist in some of the non-Russian provinces, in the Latvian Region, for instance. But there are no class organisations of the agricultural proletariat in the great majority of the Great-Russian and Ukrainian gubernias.

It is the bounden duty of the vanguard of the proletarians of Russia, the trade unions of the industrial workers, to come to the aid of their brothers, the agricultural workers. The difficulties of organising the agricultural workers are enormous—that is obvious, and it is confirmed by the experience of all capitalist countries.

All the more essential is it therefore to take advantage of the political freedom now existing in Russia to proceed as speedily and energetically as possible to found an All-Russian Union of *Agricultural Workers*. The Trade Union Conference is the body that can, and must, undertake this task. The more highly experienced, more developed and more class conscious representatives of the proletariat now assembled at this Conference can, and must, send out a call to the agricultural workers and invite them to join the ranks of the independently organised proletarians, the ranks of their trade unions. It is the wage workers of the factories who must take the initiative upon themselves, and utilise the nuclei,

groups and branches of trade unions scattered all over Russia to arouse the agricultural worker to independent life, to active participation in the struggle for the improvement of his condition, and to the defence of his class interests.

It will probably appear to many, it may indeed be the prevailing opinion, that the present moment, when the peasants are organising all over Russia, proclaiming the abolition of private property in land and "equality" of land tenure, is not the time for the formation of a trade union of agricultural workers.

But the contrary is the case. Precisely at such a period it is particularly timely and urgent. Those who share the class proletarian point of view cannot doubt the soundness of the thesis adopted by the Mensheviks at the Stockholm Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party in 1906, upon the initiative of the Bolsheviks, and since that time incorporated in the programme of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. That thesis reads:

"The Party under *all* circumstances, and *whatever* the conditions of democratic agrarian reform may be, will *unswervingly* strive for the *independent class* organisation of the *rural proletariat*, will explain to the latter the irreconcilability of its interests with the interests of the peasant bourgeoisie, will warn it against the seduction of small husbandry, which, while commodity production exists, can never do away with the poverty of the masses, and, finally, will point out the necessity for a complete socialist revolution as the only means of abolishing poverty and exploitation."

There is not a single class conscious worker, not a single trade union member, who would not admit the soundness of these statements. Their practical realisation, as far as the *independent class organisation of the agricultural proletariat* is concerned, is the business of the trade unions.

We hope that precisely in these revolutionary times, when the toiling masses generally, and the workers in particular, are manifesting an earnest endeavour to assert themselves, to make a way for themselves, and not to permit the establishment of a new order without the independent settlement of labour questions by the workers themselves, the trade unions will not confine themselves to their narrow craft interests, will not forget their weaker brethren, the agricultural workers, and will make every effort to assist them

by organising a union of the agricultural workers of Russia.

In the following article we shall endeavour to indicate a few practical steps in this direction.

SECOND ARTICLE

In the preceding article we dwelt on the fundamental importance of creating a union of agricultural workers in Russia. We shall now deal with certain practical aspects of this question.

A union of agricultural workers in Russia should embrace all who are principally, or for the most part, or even partly, engaged in agricultural enterprises as wage workers.

Experience will show whether or not it is expedient to subdivide such unions into unions of agricultural workers who are exclusively wage workers and unions of workers who are only in part wage workers. In any case, the point is not an essential one. The essential thing is that the fundamental class interests of *all* who sell their labour power are identical; and that it is absolutely essential to unite *all* who earn even part of their livelihood by hiring themselves to others.

The wage workers of the cities, of the factories and workshops, are bound by innumerable ties to the wage workers of the countryside. An appeal of the former to the latter is sure to meet with response. But a mere appeal is not enough. The urban workers possess far greater experience, knowledge, means and strength. *A part of this strength must be definitely devoted to assisting the rise of the agricultural workers.*

A day should be set, the earnings of all organised workers on which shall be contributed towards developing and strengthening the union between the wage workers of town and country. A certain part of this sum should be contributed directly by the city workers to the cause of class organisation of the agricultural workers. This fund should be used to cover the expenses of publishing a series of popular leaflets, of starting at first at least a weekly agricultural workers' paper, and of sending at least a few agitators and organisers into the countryside *to set about the immediate formation of unions of agricultural wage workers in various localities.*

Only their own experience will teach these unions the best

path of future development. The first duty of every such union must be to improve the conditions of those who sell their labour power in agricultural enterprises, to fight for higher wages, better housing, better food, etc.

We must vigorously combat the false belief that the impending abolition of private property in land is capable of "giving land" to every agricultural worker and farm hand and of undermining the foundation of wage labour in agriculture. This is a false and extremely pernicious belief. The abolition of private property in land is a great and unquestionably progressive reform, a reform unquestionably conducive to the economic development of the proletariat and to the advancement of its interests, a reform which every wage worker will support with all his heart and strength, but which will in no way abolish wage labour.

The land cannot be eaten. It is impossible to farm land without cattle, implements and seed, and without a reserve of food and money. To rely on "promises," whatever their source, on promises that the wage worker in the countryside will be assisted in acquiring cattle, implements, etc., would be the worst kind of delusion and unpardonable naiveté.

The basic rule, the first commandment, of every trade union movement must be: Do not rely on the "state," rely solely on the *strength of your own class*. The state is the organisation of the ruling class.

Do not rely on promises; rely solely on the strength of the unity and class consciousness of your own class.

The aim of the Union of Agricultural Workers must therefore immediately be not only to fight for the general improvement of the lot of the workers, but also, and in particular, to *protect their interests as a class* in the great land reform which is impending.

"Farm hands must be placed at the disposal of the volost committees"—this is the frequent opinion of the peasants and the Socialist-Revolutionaries. The point of view of the class of agricultural wage workers is the very opposite: the volost committees must be placed at the disposal of the "hands"! This contrast strikingly illustrates the difference between the position of the masters and the position of the wage workers.

"The land must belong to the whole people." That is correct. *But the people are divided into classes.* Every worker knows, sees, feels and experiences this truth, a truth deliberately concealed by the bourgeoisie, and perpetually forgotten by the petty bourgeoisie.

Nobody will help the poor as isolated individuals. No "state" will ever help the rural wage worker, the farm hand, the day labourer, the poor peasant, the semi-proletarian, *unless they help themselves.* And the first step in this direction must be the independent class organisation of the agricultural proletariat.

Let us hope that the All-Russian Conference of Trade Unions will devote itself most energetically to this cause, will send out its call to the whole of Russia, and will extend a helping hand, the mighty hand of the organised vanguard of the proletarians, to the proletarians of the countryside.

July 7 and 8 (June 24 and 25), 1917

HOW THE PEASANTS WERE DECEIVED—AND WHY

WE know that when peasant deputies from the whole of Russia assembled in Petrograd at the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies they were promised—by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and by the government—that the sale and purchase of land would be prohibited immediately.

Minister Pereverzev was at first indeed inclined to carry out this promise and sent a telegram putting a stop to all transactions involving the sale and purchase of land. But later some invisible hand intervened, and Minister Pereverzev withdrew his telegram to the public notaries, *i.e.*, he again sanctioned the sale and purchase of land.

The peasants grew uneasy. If we are not mistaken, they even sent a delegation to the Ministry.

The peasants were soothed; the peasants were reassured, as one reassures little children. They were assured that a *law* would be issued immediately prohibiting the sale and purchase of land and that Pereverzev's temporary order was "postponed" "*only*" because such a law was about to be issued.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries soothed the peasants and fed them on promises. The peasants believed them. The peasants were reassured. The peasants returned to their villages.

Weeks and weeks passed.

On July 7 (June 24)—not earlier—news appeared in the papers to the effect that Minister Chernov, leader of the Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries, had brought a bill into the government (only a bill as yet) for the prohibition of the sale and purchase of land.

On July 12 (June 29) the papers published the report of a "private conference" of the State Duma that had taken place on July 11 (June 28). At this Conference, according to *Rech* (a

paper belonging to the majority party in the Provisional Government¹), Mr. Rodzyanko

"in his concluding remarks dwelt on the question of transactions in land in connection with the new [oh yes, exceedingly new, new in the extreme!] measures of the government. He maintained that if deals in land were prohibited, the land would lose its value [for whom? for the landlords, obviously! But the peasants want to take the land away from the landlords!], all security for loans would depreciate, and the landowners [the former landowners, Mr. Rodzyanko] would be deprived of credit. From what sources, asks M. V. Rodzyanko, will the landowners pay their debts to the banks? In most cases the debts are already overdue, and such a bill would lead to the immediate abolition of all landed proprietorship by law, without auctions.

"In view of this, M. V. Rodzyanko proposed that the Conference should instruct the Provisional Committee to consider this question, and *endeavour to prevent the passage of a bill* which would be fatal not to private ownership of land but to the state."

Here, then, we have the "invisible hand" become visible! Here we have the "cunning mechanism" of the coalition government, with its near-Socialist ministers, let out of the bag by this gentleman—this former Chairman of the former State Duma, this former landlord, this former confidant of Stolypin the Hangman, this former protector of the agent-provocateur Malinovsky—Mr. Rodzyanko!

Let us even assume that now that Mr. Rodzyanko has so clumsily blurted out more than he should, the law prohibiting the sale and purchase of land will at last be passed. At last!

But that is not the whole point. The point is that this striking example should serve to make us understand, and help the peasant masses to understand, *how the peasants were deceived*, and why. For the fact is incontrovertible and indubitable: the peasants have been deceived, since what at the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies they were promised would be fulfilled immediately was *not* fulfilled immediately.

How were the peasants deceived? They were fed on promises. That is the "cunning mechanism" employed by every coalition government in the world, *i.e.*, by every bourgeois cabinet in which traitors to socialism participate. In these cabinets, the former Socialists serve—whether consciously or not is of no importance—as tools with the help of which the capitalists deceive the masses.

¹ *I.e.*, the bourgeois People's Freedom Party, usually known as the Cadets.—*Ed.*

Why were the peasants deceived? Because the tools of deceit, the Socialist-Revolutionaries—we will make the assumption most favourable to them—themselves failed to understand the cunning mechanism of class domination and class policy in the present administration of Russia. The Socialist-Revolutionaries allowed themselves to be led astray by talk. But as a matter of fact, and as the Rodzyanko “incident” strikingly proves, Russia is actually being ruled by a *bloc* of two *blocs*, by an alliance of two alliances.

One *bloc* is the *bloc* of the Cadets with the monarchist landlords, among whom Mr. Rodzyanko occupies the first place. The existence of this *bloc* as a political fact was shown in the eyes of the whole of Russia during the Petrograd elections, when *all* the Black Hundred papers, all the papers to the Right of the Cadets, supported the Cadets. Thanks to the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, this *bloc* has a *majority* in the government. This *bloc* delayed the prohibition of transactions involving the sale and purchase of land; this *bloc* is supporting the landlords and the *capitalist lockouters*.¹

The second *bloc* is the *bloc* of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, which has deceived the people by empty promises. Skobelev and Tseretelli, Peshekhonov and Chernov made promises without end. It is easy to make promises. This method of the “Socialist” ministers, namely, of feeding the people on promises, has been tried in *every* advanced country in the world, and has everywhere ended in failure. The peculiar feature of Russia is that the failure of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties will be more drastic and more precipitous than is usually the case, owing to the revolutionary situation in the country.

Let every worker and every soldier use this example, which is particularly instructive to the peasants, to explain to the peasants *how and why they were deceived*.

The peasants can achieve their ends not in a *bloc* (alliance) with the capitalists, but only in alliance with the workers.

July 14 (1), 1917

¹ Lenin calls the Russian bourgeoisie capitalist lockouters because in 1917, by disorganising industry and closing down factories, they endeavoured to establish their open dictatorship.—*Ed.*

PEASANTS AND WORKERS

No. 88 of the *Izvestiya* of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies of September 1 (August 19) contains an exceedingly interesting article, one that should become one of the basic documents in the hands of every Party propagandist and agitator working among the peasantry, and in the hands of every class conscious worker leaving for the agricultural districts, or in contact with the agricultural districts.

This article is entitled "Model Instructions Compiled from 242 Instructions Presented by Delegates from the Localities to the First All-Russian Congress of Peasants' Deputies in Petrograd in the Year 1917."

It is extremely to be desired that the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies publish particulars of these Instructions in the greatest possible detail (if it is absolutely impossible to publish them in full, which, of course, would be best of all). What is especially needed, for instance, is a complete list of the gubernias, uyezds and volosts concerned, with information as to how many Instructions came from each locality, the dates on which the Instructions were drawn up or presented, and an analysis of at least the chief demands, so that it might be seen whether there are differences between the various regions on various points. For instance, a district where land is held individually and one where it is held communally; districts populated by Great-Russians and districts populated by other nationalities; districts situated in the centre of the country and districts situated in outlying sections; districts which have never known serfdom, etc.; do they differ in any way in their attitude towards the abolition of private ownership of all *peasant* land, the periodic redistribution of land, the prohibition of hired labour, the confiscation of the landlords' implements and cattle, and so on and so forth? Without such detailed par-

ticulars a scientific study of the unusually valuable material contained in the peasants' Instructions is impossible. And we Marxists must take every pains to make a scientific study of the facts upon which our policy is based.

In the absence of better material, the *Summary of Instructions* (as we shall call the "Model Instructions"), if it be not proved incorrect as to facts, is unique, and, we repeat, should be in the possession of every member of our Party.

The first part of the Summary of Instructions is devoted to general political statements, to demands for political democracy; the second part is devoted to the land question. (Let us hope that the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, or somebody else, will make a summary of the peasants' Instructions and resolutions on the question of the war.) We shall for the present not dwell in detail on the first part and shall mention only two points: Par. 6 demands that all officials be elected; Par. 11, the abolition, upon the conclusion of the war, of the standing army. These points bring the political programme of the peasants *very close* to the programme of the Bolshevik Party. In stressing these points, we must point out and demonstrate in all our propaganda and agitational work that the leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks are traitors not only to socialism, but also to democracy; for in Kronstadt, for instance, against the will of the people, against the principles of democracy, they insisted, in complaisance to the capitalists, that the position of commissar should be *confirmed* by the government, *i.e.*, should not be purely elective. In the Borough Dumas of Petrograd, as well as in other local government institutions, the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders, contrary to democratic principles, are opposing the Bolshevik demand for the immediate organisation of a workers' militia and the subsequent organisation of a national militia.

The agrarian demands of the peasantry, according to the Summary of Instructions, consist, first of all, in the demand for the abolition, without compensation, of private ownership of land in all its forms, including peasant ownership; the transfer of highly cultivated lands to the state or to the communities; the confiscation of all livestock and farm implements on the lands confiscated

(the case of peasants with very little land is excluded) and their transfer to the state or to the communities; the prohibition of hired labour; the equable distribution of land among the toilers, with periodic redistribution, etc. As measures calculated to meet the exigencies of the transition period until the Constituent Assembly is convened, the peasants demand the *immediate* issue of laws prohibiting the sale and purchase of land; the abolition of the laws on the withdrawal from the communes and the formation of individual farms; the conservation of forests, fisheries etc.; the annulment of long-term leaseholds, the revision of short-term leaseholds, and so forth.

Very little reflection on the above demands is required to understand the utter impossibility of realising them *by an alliance* with the capitalists and, indeed, unless a complete break is made with the capitalists, unless a most resolute and merciless struggle is waged against the capitalist class, and its rule overthrown.

The self-deception of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the deceit they practise on the peasantry consist in the fact that they accept and spread the idea that such changes, changes of *such* a character, are possible without the overthrow of the domination of the capitalists, without the transfer of the whole power of the state to the proletariat, without support being given by the poor peasants to the proletarian state in its sweeping and revolutionary measures against the capitalists. It is this that makes the crystallisation of a Left Wing of the "Socialist-Revolutionaries" so significant, for it proves that the realisation of this deception is growing within the party itself.

And, indeed, the confiscation of all privately-owned land implies the confiscation of the hundreds of millions of capital of the banks in which these lands are for the most part mortgaged. Is such a measure conceivable, unless the revolutionary class smashes the resistance of the capitalists by revolutionary means? We must bear in mind that we are dealing here with the most centralised form of capital, bank capital, which is united by innumerable threads with all the most important centres of capitalist economy in a vast country, and which can be vanquished only by the not less centralised force of the urban proletariat.

Further, the transfer to the government of highly cultivated farms. Is it not obvious that a "state" which would be capable of taking over and really managing such farms for the benefit of the worker, and not for the benefit of the officials and the capitalists, must needs be a revolutionary proletarian state?

The confiscation of stud farms, etc., and of all livestock and farm implements—that is not only another tremendous blow to private property in the means of production; it is a step towards socialism. For the placing of farm implements at the "exclusive use of the state or the commune" implies the necessity for large-scale socialist agriculture, or, at least, socialist control over the united small estates, socialist regulation of their activities.

And the "prohibition" of hired labour? That is but an empty phrase, the helpless, unenlightened and naive yearning of down-trodden petty proprietors, who do not realise that all capitalist industry would come to a standstill if there were not a reserve army of wage labour in the villages, that it is impossible to "prohibit" hired labour in the country when it is permitted in the town, and that, as a matter of fact, the "prohibition" of hired labour would be a step towards socialism.

And this has brought us to the fundamental question of the relation of the workers to the peasants.

There has been a mass Social-Democratic labour movement in Russia for more than twenty years (if we count from the big strikes of 1896). Like a crimson thread the following question runs through this considerable interval, through two great revolutions, through the entire political history of Russia: Will the working class lead the peasants forward, towards socialism, or will the liberal bourgeoisie drag them backwards, to a reconciliation with capitalism?

The opportunist wing of the Social-Democrats reason in accordance with the following sapient formula: *Since* the Socialist-Revolutionaries are petty bourgeois, "we" reject their philistine utopian conception of socialism for a bourgeois negation of socialism. Marxism is happily replaced by Struvism, while Menshevism sinks to the role of a lackey to the Cadets, and endeavours to "reconcile" the peasant to the domination of the

bourgeoisie. Tseretelli and Skobelev, hand in hand with Chernov and Avksentyev, are busy signing the reactionary decrees of the Cadet landlords in the name of "revolutionary democracy"—that is the latest and most obvious expression of the part they are playing.

The revolutionary Social-Democrats, who have never abandoned their criticism of the petty-bourgeois illusions of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and *who have never combined* with them unless it be against the Cadets, have always striven to *emancipate* the peasants from the influence of the Cadets and have always advocated, as against the philistine utopian conception of socialism, not a liberal reconciliation with capitalism, but a revolutionary proletarian path to socialism.

Now that the war has tremendously accelerated development, has rendered the crisis of capitalism acute in the extreme, and has forced the peoples to make an immediate choice between ruin and the adoption of urgent and determined measures towards socialism, the abysmal difference between semi-liberal Menshevism and revolutionary proletarian Bolshevism assumes prominence as a practical question involving the action of tens of millions of peasants.

Reconcile yourselves to the reign of capital, because "we" are not yet ripe for socialism—that is what the Mensheviks say to the peasants, thus, by the way, substituting the abstract question of "socialism" in general for the concrete question of whether the wounds caused by the war can be healed unless definite measures towards socialism are taken.

Reconcile yourselves to capitalism, because the Socialist-Revolutionaries are petty-bourgeois utopians—that is what the Mensheviks say to the peasants; and together with the Socialist-Revolutionaries they support the Cadet government. . . .

And the Socialist-Revolutionaries, beating their breasts, assure the peasants that they are opposed to a peace of any kind with the capitalists, that they have never regarded the Russian revolution as bourgeois—and that is *precisely why* they have formed a *bloc* with the opportunist Social-Democrats and are supporting a bourgeois government. . . . The Socialist-Revolutionaries will sub-

scribe to any kind of programme of the peasantry, even the most revolutionary—but they never carry them out; they shelve them, fool the peasants with empty promises, and in practice waste months in “compromising” with the Cadets within the coalition government.

This outrageous, direct and palpable betrayal of the interests of the peasants by the Socialist-Revolutionaries in practice has changed the situation enormously. We must reckon with this change. We must not continue merely to agitate against the Socialist-Revolutionaries in the old way, in the way we did in 1902-03 and in 1905-07. We must not confine ourselves to a theoretical confutation of petty-bourgeois illusions, such as “the socialisation of the land,” “equal land tenure,” “prohibition of hired labour,” etc.

That was on the eve of the bourgeois revolution, or when the bourgeois revolution was still incomplete, and our whole task then was primarily to bring about the downfall of the monarchy.

Now the monarchy has been overthrown. The bourgeois revolution is completed, inasmuch as Russia is now a democratic republic, with a government made up of Cadets, Mensheviks, and Socialist-Revolutionaries. And in three years the war has dragged us thirty years ahead; in Europe it has established universal labour service and the compulsory trustification of enterprises; it has brought the most advanced countries to a state of famine and unprecedented ruin and forced them to take measures towards socialism.

Only the proletariat and the peasantry can overthrow the monarchy—that, in those days, was the fundamental definition of our class policy. And that definition was a correct one. February and March 1917 corroborated it once again.

Only the proletariat, leading the poor peasantry (the semi-proletarians, as our programme calls them), can end the war by a democratic peace, can heal the wounds it has caused, and can begin to take measures towards socialism, measures which have become absolutely essential and *urgent*—such is the definition of our class policy at the present time.

From this it follows that the central point of our propaganda

and agitation against the Socialist-Revolutionaries must be that they have betrayed the peasants. They represent not the mass of poor peasants, but a minority of rich peasant owners. They are leading the peasantry not towards an alliance with the workers, but towards an alliance with the capitalists, i.e., towards subjection to the capitalists. They have sold the interests of the toiling and exploited masses for berths in the government, for a coalition with the Mensheviks and the Cadets.

History, accelerated by the war, has made such forward strides that old formulas have acquired a new content. "Prohibition of hired labour" was at one time merely an empty phrase of the petty-bourgeois intellectual. In actual practice it now means something else: in the 242 Instructions millions of poor peasants have announced their desire to abolish hired labour; but they do not know how to accomplish it. We do know how to accomplish it. We know that it can be accomplished only by an alliance with the workers, and under their leadership, only by fighting the capitalists, and not by "compromising" with the capitalists.

This is the change we must make in our basic line of propaganda and agitation against the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and in the basic line of our speeches to the peasants.

The Socialist-Revolutionary Party has betrayed you, comrades peasants. It has betrayed the cabins and sided with the palaces; if not with the palaces of the monarch, at least with the palaces where the Cadets—the most bitter enemies of the revolution, and especially of the peasant revolution—participate in the government together with the Chernovs, the Peshekhonovs and the Avksentyevs.

Only the revolutionary proletariat, only the vanguard that unites it, the Bolshevik Party, can put *into practice* the programme of the poor peasants as set forth in their 242 Instructions. For the revolutionary proletariat is *actually* making for the abolition of hired labour, following the only true road—the overthrow of capital, and not by forbidding the hiring of labourers, not by prohibiting wage labour. The revolutionary proletariat is actually making for the confiscation of land, farm stock and technical

agricultural enterprises—for that which the peasants want, and which the Socialist-Revolutionaries *cannot* give them.

That is the way the fundamental line of the speeches of the worker to the peasant must be changed. We workers can give you, and will give you, what the poor peasants want and seek, without always knowing where and how to seek it. We workers are defending our own interests *against the capitalists*, and at the same time we are defending the interests of the overwhelming majority of the peasantry, whereas the Socialist-Revolutionaries are allying themselves with the capitalists and betraying those interests.

* * *

Let us remind the reader of what Engels said on the peasant question shortly before his death. Engels stated that Socialists did not even dream of expropriating the small peasants, and that only the *force of example* could teach the latter the advantages of socialist mechanised agriculture.

The war has now confronted Russia practically with a question of precisely this kind. There are not enough farm implements. They must be confiscated, but the highly cultivated estates must not be “divided up.”

The peasants have begun to understand this. Necessity has forced them to understand it. They have been forced to understand it by the war, because farm implements are nowhere to be got. What we have must be husbanded. Large-scale farms imply the husbanding of labour expended on farm implements, as well as on much else.

The peasants want to retain their small holdings, to equalise them according to standards, and to re-equalise them periodicaly. . . . Let them. No intelligent Socialist will quarrel with the poor peasants on this score. If the land is confiscated it will undermine the rule of the banks; if farm property is confiscated, it will undermine the rule of capital. And *with the proletariat ruling in the centre*, with political power transferred to the proletariat, the rest will come *of itself*; it will come by “force of example,” it will be prompted by experience itself.

The crux of the matter is the transfer of political power to

the proletariat. Given that, everything essential and fundamental in the programme of the 242 Instructions will *become possible of realisation*. And actual experience will show what modifications are needed in the realisation. That is the last thing to worry about. We are not doctrinaires. Our teaching is not a dogma, but a guide to action.

We do not claim that Marx or the Marxists know the road to socialism in every concrete detail. That would be nonsense. We know the direction of the road, we know what class forces are following the road; but the concrete and practical details will be learned only from the experience of the millions when they begin to take action.

Trust the workers, comrades peasants; break your alliance with the capitalists! Only in close union with the workers *can* you begin to realise the programme contained in the 242 Instructions. In alliance with the capitalists and under the direction of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, you will never live to see a *single* effective and unalterable step taken in the spirit of that programme.

But when, in union with the urban workers, in a merciless struggle against capital, you *begin* to carry out the programme of the 242 Instructions, the whole world will come to your aid and to ours, and the success of this programme—not as it is now formulated, but in its essence—will be assured. That will mark the end of the domination of capital and of wage slavery. That will mark the beginning of the reign of socialism, the reign of peace, the reign of the toilers.

September 11 (August 29), 1917

POSTSCRIPT TO THE BOOK *THE AGRARIAN PROGRAMME
OF SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY IN THE FIRST RUSSIAN
REVOLUTION, 1905-07*

THIS book was written at the end of 1907. In 1908 it was printed in St. Petersburg, but was seized and destroyed by the tsarist censor. Only one copy survived, in which, however, the last part (p. 270 *et seq.* in the present edition) is missing; so that this part has been added now.

At the present time the revolution renders the agrarian question in Russia infinitely wider, profounder and acuter than was the case in 1905-07. An acquaintance with the history of the programme of our Party during the first revolution will, I hope, facilitate a more correct understanding of the aims of the present revolution.

The following circumstance must be particularly emphasised. The war has inflicted such untold miseries upon the belligerent countries, and has at the same time so tremendously accelerated the development of capitalism by transforming monopoly capitalism into state monopoly capitalism, that neither the proletariat nor the revolutionary petty-bourgeois democracy can now confine themselves within the limits of capitalism.

Reality has already passed beyond these limits, and has rendered urgent such questions as the regulation of production and distribution on a nation-wide scale, universal labour service, compulsory trustification, etc.

Under such circumstances, the nationalisation of the land advocated in the agrarian programme also inevitably assumes a different aspect. Nationalisation of the land is now no longer "the last word" of the bourgeois revolution, but is *a step towards socialism*. It is impossible to combat the disasters inflicted by the war unless such steps are taken.

In leading the poor peasantry, the proletariat is obliged, on the one hand, to shift the centre of gravity from the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies to the Soviets of Agricultural Workers' Deputies, and, on the other, to demand the nationalisation of the agricultural implements of the landed estates, as well as the transformation of these estates into model farms under the control of the latter Soviets.

I cannot, of course, dwell here in greater detail on these important questions, and must refer the interested reader to current Bolshevik literature and to my pamphlets *Letters on Tactics* and *The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution (Draft of a Platform for the Proletarian Party)*.¹

October (September) 1917

¹ Pp. 31-44 and 45-76 in this volume.--Ed.

A NEW FRAUD PRACTISED ON THE PEASANTS BY THE SOCIALIST-REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

ON October 31 (18) and November 1 (October 19), the Socialist-Revolutionary Party in its chief newspaper, *Dyelo Naroda*, solemnly declared to the whole country that the new agrarian bill of the Minister for Agriculture is "a great step towards the realisation of the agrarian programme of the party," and that "the Central Committee of the party urges all organisations of the party to develop energetic propaganda in favour of the bill and to popularise it among the masses."

In reality, this bill, introduced by Minister S. L. Maslov, a member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, the main features of which are given in *Dyelo Naroda*, is a fraud on the peasants. The Socialist-Revolutionary Party has deceived the peasants: it has abandoned its own agrarian bill and accepted the plan of the landlords and the Cadets for a "fair valuation" and for the preservation of landed proprietorship. The Socialist-Revolutionary Party at its congresses during the first (1905) and second (1917) Russian revolutions solemnly and publicly promised to support the peasants' demand for the *confiscation* of the landed estates, i.e., for their transfer to the peasants *without compensation*! Mr. S. L. Maslov's present bill not only leaves the property rights of the landlords intact, but even provides that the payments of the peasants for the lands "rented" on a "fair" valuation *are to be made to the landlords*.

Mr. S. L. Maslov's bill is an utter betrayal of the peasants by the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. It means that this party has completely deserted to the side of the landlords. We must strain every effort, we must exert all our strength to achieve the widest possible recognition of this truth by the peasants.

Dyelo Naroda of October 31 (18) printed Pars. 25-40 of S. L. Maslov's bill. Here are the main, fundamental features of the bill:

1) Not all the landed estates are to form part of the projected "provisional land lease fund."

2) The inclusion of landed estates in this fund is to be effected by *Land Committees* created under the law of May 4 (April 21), 1917, passed by the government of Prince Lvov, a *landlords'* government.

3) The amount of rent to be paid to the landlords by the peasants is to be fixed by the Land Committees "according to the net revenue derived," and, after deduction of various payments, accrues "to the respective owners," i.e., to the landlords.

This is a triple deceit of the peasants by the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and it is therefore necessary to dwell on each of these points in greater detail.

The *Izvestiya* of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies of September 1 (August 19), No. 88, has printed "Model Instructions" compiled from 242 Instructions presented by deputies from various localities to the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies held in Petrograd in 1917.

No *better* material can be imagined than *this summary of 242 Instructions*, drawn up by the elected representatives of the peasants in their localities, for forming an opinion of the *peasants' desires*. And this summary shows with perfect clarity the fraud practised on the peasantry by S. L. Maslov's bill and by the Socialist-Revolutionary Party.

The peasants demand the abolition of private property in land; the conversion of *all* privately-owned and other lands into the property of the whole people, without compensation; the conversion of highly cultivated estates (orchards, plantations, etc.) into "model farms" to be run "exclusively by the state and the communes"; the confiscation of "*all* livestock and farm implements"; and so on.

This is the way the demands of the peasants are formulated, precisely and clearly, in the 242 Instructions drawn up by the peasants themselves in their localities.

But the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, having formed a "coalition" with the bourgeoisie (capitalists) and the landlords, and

participating in a government of capitalists and landlords, has now drawn up a bill which *does not abolish landed property* but only assigns part of the landed estates to a *provisional land lease fund!*

According to the bill, orchards, plantations, sugar-beet fields, etc., must *not* be included in the lease fund! *Nor* may there be included in the fund land required "for the needs of the owner himself, his family, his employees and workers, and for the maintenance of his livestock"!

That means that a rich landlord who possesses a sugar refinery or potato distillery, oil presses or flour mills, orchards and plantations, hundreds of head of cattle and dozens of employees and workers, will *retain possession of a vast economic enterprise, and a capitalist enterprise at that*. That is how brazenly and shamelessly the Socialist-Revolutionary Party has deceived the peasants.

The inclusion of the landed—or, as the bill has it, "privately-owned"—estates in the land lease fund will be effected by the *Land Committees* created under the law of May 4 (April 21), 1917, which was passed by the government of Prince Lvov and Co.—a *landlords'* government, the government of the Milyukovs and Guchkovs, the imperialists and plunderers of the masses, which the workers and soldiers of Petrograd smashed in the movement of May 3-4 (April 20-21), i.e., fully half a year ago.

Obviously, the law on the Land Committees passed by this landlords' government is far from being a democratic (people's) law. On the contrary, this law contains a number of outrageous departures from democracy. For instance, Par. 11 of this law gives "the gubernia Land Committees the right to suspend the decisions of volost and uyezd Committees pending final decision by the Chief Land Committee." And the Committees are, in accordance with the fraudulent law written by the landlords, so constituted that the uyezd Committees are less democratic than the volost Committees, the gubernia Committees are less democratic than the uyezd Committees, and the Chief Committee less democratic than the gubernia Committees.

The volost Land Committees are entirely elected by the population of the volost. The uyezd Committees, according to the law,

include, for instance, a justice of the peace and five members of the "provisional Executive Committees" (pending the organisation of new local government bodies). The gubernia Committees include not only a member of the circuit court and a justice of the peace, but also a representative of the Ministry, *appointed* by the Minister, and so forth. The Chief Land Committee includes twenty-seven members "invited by the Provisional Government"! It also includes one representative from each of the eleven political parties, whereby the majority (six out of eleven) falls to the Cadets and the parties to the Right of the Cadets. What is this if not a fraud on the part of Lvov and Shingarev (who signed the law) and their friends? What is this if not a mockery of democracy to please the landlords?

Does this not entirely corroborate the declarations repeatedly made by the Bolsheviks that *Soviets of Peasants' Deputies*, which are elected by *the mass of the toilers* and subject to recall by them at any time, are alone able to correctly express the will of the peasantry and give it practical effect?

The Socialist-Revolutionaries, who, thanks to the unenlightened trustfulness of the peasants, obtained a majority in the All-Russian Executive Committee of the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, have *betrayed* the peasants. They have *betrayed* the Peasants' Soviets, they have *deserted to the side of the landlords*, and have reconciled themselves to the law of the landlord Prince Lvov on the Land Committees. That is the second great fraud practised on the peasants by the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

All the more emphatically must we, the workers' party, insist on the demand of the Bolsheviks that all power in the villages pass to the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies and Agricultural Workers' Deputies.

The peasant Instructions demand the confiscation, the alienation of landlords' estates *without compensation*, the confiscation of stud farms and private cattle-breeding and poultry-breeding farms, the transfer to the state of all highly cultivated estates, and the confiscation of all the livestock and farm implements of the landed estates.

Instead of this, the ministerial bill of the Socialist-Revolution-

aries treats the peasants with *the preservation of rent*, which, as hitherto, is to pass into the pocket of the landlord!

"Rent," runs Par. 33 of the bill of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, "shall be paid into the Committees, which (having made all due payments to the state, etc.) shall hand over the balance to the respective owners."

And so the "Socialist-Revolutionaries," having fooled the peasants with extravagant promises, present the peasants with a landlord and Cadet agrarian bill.

That is an utter fraud on the peasants.

Absolutely nothing remains of the peasants' demands for confiscation. Instead of the confiscation of landed property, we have its *consolidation* by a "republican" government, which guarantees the landlords the *preservation* of their farm implements, land for the maintenance of their "employees and workers," land "designed" (it is enough that it shall be "designed") by the owners for sowing under sugar-beet and other industrial crops, as well as payment for the remaining land, which passes into the land lease fund. The Land Committees are transformed into *rent collectors for the landed gentry*.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries are not abolishing landed proprietorship; they are fortifying it. Their desertion to the landlords and their betrayal of the peasants is being revealed beyond all shadow of doubt.

We must not allow ourselves to be fooled by the crafty Cadets, the loyal friends of the capitalists and landlords. The Cadets are pretending that the bill of the Socialist-Revolutionaries is extraordinarily "revolutionary." All the bourgeois papers are raising a hue-and-cry against the bill; everywhere statements are being published describing the "resistance" put up by the bourgeois ministers (and, of course, by their direct henchmen, like Kerensky) to this "terrible" bill. All this is a farce, a game, the bid of a haggling merchant, who sees the spinelessness of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and hopes to drive a better bargain. The fact is that S. L. Maslov's bill is a *landlords' bill*, a bill written *for the purpose* of reaching a compromise with the landlords and saving them.

When the issues of *Dyelo Naroda* above referred to term this bill "an outstanding agrarian bill, which starts [!] the great [!]"

reform for the socialisation [!!!] of the land," this is pure charlatanism. There is not a trace of "socialisation" in the bill (except perhaps the "social" aid to the landlord in guaranteeing his rents); there is absolutely nothing "revolutionary-democratic" in it; there is nothing in it generally, except "reforms" of the Irish type customary to European *bourgeois reformism*.

We repeat, this is a bill *designed to save* the landlords and to "pacify" the rising peasant revolt by making trivial concessions, while retaining everything essential for the landlords.

The introduction of this shameful bill by the Socialist-Revolutionaries is a clear illustration of the unprecedented hypocrisy of those who are denouncing the Bolsheviks for attempting to frustrate the Constituent Assembly by planning to transfer the power to the Soviets. "Only forty days separate us from the Constituent Assembly," is the hypocritical cry of the Cadets, capitalists, landlords, Mensheviks, and Socialist-Revolutionaries. And under cover of the hubbub, a momentous agrarian bill is being introduced, a bill for *defrauding* the peasants, *enslaving* them to the landlords, and *consolidating* landed property.

When it is necessary to protect the landlords against the growing tide of peasant revolt, it is "possible" to carry through so momentous a bill forty, or even thirty days before the Constituent Assembly.

But when it is a question of transferring the entire power to the Soviets, *in order that all* the land may be handed over to the peasants, in order that landed property may be abolished *immediately*, in order that a just peace may be proposed *immediately*—oh, then the Cadets, the capitalists, the landlords, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries raise a concerted howl against the Bolsheviks.

Let the peasants know how the Socialist-Revolutionary Party has defrauded them, how it has betrayed them to the landlords.

Let the peasants know that only the *workers'* party, only the Bolsheviks, are firmly and irrevocably against the capitalists and the landlords and for the *poor* peasantry and all the toilers.

November 2 (October 20), 1917

PART V

THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

THE SECOND ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES

November 7-8 (October 25-26), 1917

TO THE WORKERS, SOLDIERS AND PEASANTS

THE Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies has begun. A vast majority of the Soviets are represented at the Congress. There are also present a number of delegates from the Peasants' Soviets. The mandate of the compromising Central Executive Committee has terminated. Backed by the will of the vast majority of workers, soldiers and peasants, backed by the successful uprising of the workers and of the garrison in Petrograd, the Congress takes the power of government into its hands.

The Provisional Government has been overthrown. The majority of the members of the Provisional Government are already arrested.

The Soviet government will propose an immediate democratic peace to all peoples and an immediate armistice on all fronts. It will secure the transfer of the estates of the landlords, appanages and monasterial lands to the control of the peasants' committees without compensation; it will protect the rights of the soldiers by introducing complete democracy in the army; it will establish workers' control over production; it will see to it that the Constituent Assembly is convened at its appointed time; it will see to it that bread is supplied to the cities and articles of prime necessity to the villages; it will guarantee all the nations inhabiting Russia the genuine right of self-determination.

The Congress decrees: all power in the localities shall pass to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, which must guarantee genuine revolutionary order.

The Congress calls upon the soldiers in the trenches to be watchful and firm. The Congress of Soviets is convinced that the revolutionary army will succeed in defending the revolution from all attacks of imperialism until such time as the new government succeeds in concluding a democratic peace, which it will propose directly to all the peoples. The new government will take measures to supply all the needs of the revolutionary army by resorting to a determined policy of requisitioning and taxation of the propertied classes, and also to improve the condition of the soldiers' families.

The Kornilovists—Kerensky, Kaledin and others—are attempting to bring troops against Petrograd. A few detachments who, duped by Kerensky, had moved on Petrograd, have come over to the side of the people in revolt.

Soldiers, actively resist the Kornilovist Kerensky! Be on your guard!

Railwaymen, hold up the troop trains dispatched by Kerensky against Petrograd!

Soldiers, workers, and employees, the fate of the revolution and the fate of the democratic peace is in your hands!

Long live the Revolution!

*The All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers'
and Soldiers' Deputies
The Delegates from the Peasants' Soviets*

November 8 (October 26), 1917

REPORT ON THE PEACE QUESTION, NOVEMBER 8 (OCTOBER 26), 1917

The question of peace is a burning and painful question of the day. Much has been said and written on the subject, and you have all, no doubt, discussed it not a little. Permit me, therefore, to proceed to read a declaration which the government you have elected must publish.

Decree on Peace

The workers' and peasants' government created by the revolution of November 6-7 (October 24-25) and backed by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies calls upon all the belligerent peoples and their governments to start immediate negotiations for a just and democratic peace.

By a just, or democratic, peace, for which the vast majority of the working and toiling classes of all belligerent countries, exhausted, tormented and racked by the war, are craving, a peace that has been most definitely and insistently demanded by the Russian workers and peasants ever since the overthrow of the tsarist monarchy—by such a peace the government means an immediate peace without annexations (*i.e.*, the seizure of foreign lands, or the forcible incorporation of foreign nations) and indemnities.

The government of Russia calls upon all the belligerent nations to conclude such a peace immediately, and expresses its readiness to take the most resolute measures without the least delay, pending the final ratification of the conditions of this peace by plenipotentiary assemblies of the people's representatives of all countries and all nations.

In accordance with the sense of justice of the democracy in general, and of the toiling classes in particular, the government interprets the annexation, or seizure, of foreign lands as meaning the incorporation into a large and powerful state of a small or feeble nation without the definitely, clearly and voluntarily expressed consent and wish of that nation, irrespective of the time such forcible incorporation took place, irrespective of the degree of development or backwardness of the nation forcibly annexed to, or forcibly retained within, the frontiers of the given state, and finally, irrespective of whether the nation inhabits Europe or distant, overseas countries.

If any nation whatsoever is forcibly retained within the boundaries of a given state, if, in spite of its expressed desire—no matter whether that desire is expressed in the press, at popular meetings, in party decisions, or in protests and revolts against national

oppression—it is not permitted the right to decide the forms of its state existence by a free vote, taken after the complete evacuation of the troops of the incorporating or, generally, of the stronger nation, without the least pressure being brought to bear upon it, such incorporation is annexation, *i.e.*, seizure and coercion.

The government considers that it would be the greatest of crimes against humanity to continue this war for the purpose of dividing up among the strong and rich nations the feeble nationalities seized by them, and solemnly declares its determination to sign immediately conditions of peace terminating this war on the conditions indicated, which are equally just for all peoples without exception.

At the same time the government declares that it does not regard the above-mentioned terms of peace as an ultimatum; in other words, it is prepared to consider any other conditions of peace, but only insists that they be advanced as speedily as possible by any of the belligerent nations, and that in the conditions of peace proposed there should be absolute clarity and the complete absence of all ambiguity and secrecy.

The government abolishes secret diplomacy and, for its part, expresses its firm determination to conduct all negotiations quite openly before the whole people. It will immediately proceed to the full publication of the secret treaties ratified or concluded by the government of landlords and capitalists during the period March (February) to November 7 (October 25), 1917. The government proclaims the absolute and immediate annulment of the contents of all such secret treaties, since they are aimed, as in the majority of cases they are, at securing advantages and privileges for the Russian landlords and capitalists and at the retention, or extension, of the annexations made by the Great-Russians.

Appealing to the governments and peoples of all countries immediately to begin open negotiations for the conclusion of peace, the government, for its part, expresses its readiness to conduct such negotiations in writing or by telegraph, or by negotiations between representatives of the various countries, or at a conference of representatives. In order to facilitate such negotia-

tions, the government is commissioning its plenipotentiary representatives to neutral countries.

The government proposes to all the governments and peoples of the belligerent countries to conclude an immediate armistice and, for its part, considers it desirable that the armistice should be concluded for no less than three months, i.e., for a period long enough to permit the conclusion of negotiations for peace with the participation of the representatives of all peoples and nations involved in or compelled to take part in the war, without exception, and the summoning of plenipotentiary assemblies of the representatives of the peoples of all countries for the final ratification of the terms of peace.

While addressing this proposal for peace to the governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia appeals in particular to the class conscious workers of the three most advanced nations of mankind, the largest states participating in the present war, namely, Great Britain, France and Germany. The workers of these countries have made the greatest contributions to the cause of progress and socialism; they have furnished the great examples of the Chartist movement in England, a number of revolutions of world and historic importance made by the French proletariat, and, finally, the heroic struggle against the Anti-Socialist Law in Germany and the example shown to the workers of the whole world in the protracted, persistent and disciplined work of creating mass proletarian organisations in Germany. All these examples of proletarian heroism and historical creative work serve as a pledge that the workers of the countries mentioned will understand the duty that now lies upon them of emancipating mankind from the horrors of war and its consequences. For these workers, by comprehensive, determined, and supremely energetic action, can help us to bring to a successful conclusion the cause of peace, and at the same time the cause of the emancipation of the toiling and exploited masses of the population from all forms of slavery and all forms of exploitation.

The Workers' and Peasants' Government created by the revolution of November 6-7 (October 24-25) and backed by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, must begin immediate negotiations for peace. Our appeal must be directed both to the governments and to the peoples. We cannot ignore the governments, for that would delay the possibility of concluding peace, and the people's government dare not do that; but we have no right not to appeal to the peoples at the same time. Everywhere there are differences between the governments and the peoples, and we must therefore help the peoples to interfere in the question of war and peace. We will, of course, insist upon the whole of our programme for a peace without annexations and indemnities. We shall not retreat from that programme; but we must deprive our enemies of the opportunity of declaring that their conditions are different from ours and that therefore it is useless to start negotiations with us. No, we must deprive them of that advantageous position and not advance our terms in the form of an ultimatum. Therefore the point is included that we are ready to consider all terms of peace and all proposals. We shall consider them, but that does not necessarily mean that we shall accept them. We shall submit them to the consideration of the Constituent Assembly, which will have the power to decide what concessions can or cannot be made. We are combating the duplicity of governments which in words talk of peace and justice, but in fact wage annexationist and predatory wars. There is not a single government that will say all it thinks. We, however, are opposed to secret diplomacy and will act openly in the eyes of the whole people. We do not, and never did, close our eyes to difficulties. War cannot be ended by refusal, it cannot be ended by one side only. We are proposing an armistice for three months, but shall not reject a shorter period, so that the exhausted army may breathe freely even for a little while, and because, moreover, in all the civilised countries national assemblies must be summoned for the discussion of terms.

In proposing the conclusion of an immediate armistice, we appeal to the class conscious workers of the countries that have done so much for the development of the proletarian movement.

We appeal to the workers of England, where there was the Chartist movement, to the workers of France, who have in repeated insurrections displayed the strength of their class consciousness, and to the workers of Germany, who waged the fight against the Anti-Socialist Law and have created powerful organisations.

In the manifesto of March 27 (14) we called for the overthrow of the bankers, but, far from overthrowing our own bankers, we entered into an alliance with them. Now we have overthrown the government of the bankers.

The government and the bourgeoisie will make every effort to unite their forces and drown the workers' and peasants' revolution in blood. But the three years of war have been a good lesson to the masses: Soviet movements in other countries, the mutiny in the German fleet, which was crushed by the *Junkers* of the hangman Wilhelm. Finally, we must remember that we are not living in the wilds of Africa, but in Europe, where news can spread quickly.

The workers' movement will triumph and will lay the path to peace and to socialism.

* * *

REPORT ON THE LAND QUESTION, NOVEMBER 8 (OCTOBER 26)

1917

We consider that the revolution has demonstrated and proved how important it is that the land question should be stated clearly. The outbreak of the armed insurrection, the second, or October, Revolution, clearly proves that the land must be handed over to the peasants. A crime was committed by the government that has been overthrown and by the compromising parties of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who kept postponing the settlement of the land question on various pretexts and thereby brought the country to a state of ruin and faced it with a peasant revolt. False, cowardly and deceitful sound their statements regarding the pogroms and anarchy in the villages. Where and when did pogroms and anarchy result from wise measures? If the govern-

ment had acted wisely, and if their measures had met the needs of the peasant poor, would there have been unrest among the peasant masses? But all the measures of the government, approved by the Avksentyev and Dan Soviets, were directed against the peasants and forced them into revolt.

Having brought about an insurrection, the government began to howl about the pogroms and anarchy for which they themselves were responsible. They would fain have crushed the insurrection by blood and iron, but were themselves swept away by the armed revolt of the revolutionary soldiers, sailors and workers. The first duty of the government of the workers' and peasants' revolution is to settle the land question, which can pacify and satisfy the vast masses of the peasant poor. I shall read you the points of a decree your Soviet government must issue. In one of the points of that decree are embodied the Instructions to the Land Committees which have been compiled from 242 Instructions from local Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

Decree on the Land

1) Landed proprietorship is abolished forthwith without compensation.

2) The landed estates, as also all appanages, the monasterial and church lands, with all their livestock, implements, farm buildings and everything pertaining thereto, shall be placed under the control of the volost Land Committees and the uyezd Soviets of Peasants' Deputies pending the meeting of the Constituent Assembly.

3) All damage to confiscated property, which henceforth belongs to the whole people, is declared to be a felony, punishable by the revolutionary courts. The uyezd Soviets of Peasants' Deputies shall take all necessary measures for the preservation of the strictest order during the confiscation of the estates of the landlords, for determining estates of which size and which particular estates shall be subject to confiscation, for drawing up inventories

of all property confiscated and for the strictest revolutionary protection of all land transferred to the people and all structures, implements, cattle, supplies, etc.

4) The following peasant Instructions, compiled from 242 local peasant Instructions, as published in No. 88 of the *Izvestiya* of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies (Petrograd, September 1 [August 19], 1917), are everywhere to serve as a guide in carrying through the great land reforms pending their final ratification by the Constituent Assembly.

5) The land of ordinary peasants and ordinary Cossacks shall not be confiscated.¹

THE PEASANT INSTRUCTIONS ON THE LAND

The question of the land in its full scope can be settled only by a National Constituent Assembly.

The most just settlement of the land question is as follows:

1) *The right of private property in land shall be abolished in perpetuity: land shall not be purchased, sold, leased, mortgaged, or otherwise alienated.*

All land, whether state, appanage, tsar's, monasterial, church, factory, primogenitory, private, public, peasant, etc., shall be taken over without compensation and become the property of the whole people, to be used by those who cultivate it.

Persons who suffer by this property revolution shall be entitled to public support only for a period necessary for adaptation to their new conditions of existence.

2) All mineral wealth, e.g., ore, oil, coal, salt, etc., as well as all forests and waters of state importance, shall be reserved for the exclusive use of the state. Small streams, lakes, woods, etc., shall be reserved for the use of the communes and be administered by the local government bodies.

3) Lands with highly developed forms of cultivation, e.g., orchards, plantations, nurseries, hothouses, etc., shall not be divided up, but shall be transformed into model farms to be cultivated exclusively either by the state or by the communes, according to their size and importance.

Urban and village household land, orchards and gardens shall remain in the use of their present owners, the size of such holdings, and the amount of taxation levied for the use thereof, to be determined by law.

4) Stud farms, government and private pedigree stock and poultry farms, etc., shall be confiscated and become the property of the whole people; they shall be run exclusively by the state or by the communes, according to their size and importance.

¹ In the text of the Decree on the Land as originally printed point 5 comes after the Peasant Instructions on the Land Question, which appertain to point 4.—Ed.

The question of compensation is subject to the decision of the Constituent Assembly.

5) All livestock and farm implements of the confiscated lands shall be reserved for the exclusive use of either the state or the communes, according to their size and importance, and no compensation shall be paid therefor.

The farm implements of peasants possessing little land shall not be subject to confiscation.

6) The right to use the land shall belong to all citizens of the Russian state (without distinction of sex) desiring to cultivate it by their own labour, with the help of their families, or in partnership, and only as long as they are able to cultivate it by their own efforts. The employment of hired labour is prohibited.

In the event of the accidental physical disablement of any member of a village community for a period of two years, the village community shall be obliged to assist him within this period by means of collective cultivation of his land, until he is again able to work.

Peasants who, owing to age or ill-health, are permanently disabled from personally cultivating the land shall lose their right to the use of it, but, in return, shall receive a pension from the state.

7) Land tenure shall be on an equality basis, i.e., the land shall be distributed among the toilers in conformity with either the labour standard or the consumption standard, as local conditions shall warrant.

There shall be absolutely no restriction as to the forms of land tenure: household, farm, communal, or co-operative, as shall be determined in each individual village.

8) All land, when alienated, shall pass into the land fund of the people. Its distribution among the toilers shall be controlled by the local and central government bodies, from democratically organised village and city communes, without distinction of social rank, to central oblast government bodies.

The land fund shall be subject to periodical redistribution, in accordance with the growth of population and the increase in the productivity and efficiency of agriculture.

When the boundaries of allotments are altered, the primary nucleus of the allotment must be left intact.

The land of lapsed members shall revert to the land fund; preferential right to such land shall belong to the near relatives of the lapsed member, or to persons designated by him.

In the case of land which has reverted to the land fund, the cost of fertiliser and improvements put into the soil, to the extent that they have not been fully exhausted, shall be compensated.

Should the available land fund in a particular district prove inadequate for the needs of the population, the surplus population shall be settled elsewhere.

The state shall take upon itself the organisation of resettlement and shall bear the cost thereof, as well as the cost of supplying implements, etc.

Resettlement shall be effected in the following order: first of all, landless peasants desiring to resettle, then members of the commune of depraved or vicious habits, deserters, and so on, and the remainder by lot or by agreement.

The entire contents of these Instructions, as expressing the absolute will of the vast majority of the class conscious peasants

of the whole of Russia, are declared a provisional law, which, pending the meeting of the Constituent Assembly, shall be carried into effect as far as possible immediately, and as to certain of its provisions with the due gradualness, as shall be determined by the uyezd Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

* * *

I hear voices stating that the decree itself and the Instructions were drawn up by the Socialist-Revolutionaries. Be it so. Does it matter who drew it up? As a democratic government, we cannot ignore the decision of the rank and file of the people, even though we may disagree with it; in the fire of experience, applying the decree in practice, and carrying it out locally, the peasants will themselves understand where the truth lies. And even if the peasants continue to follow the Socialist-Revolutionaries, even if they give this party a majority in the Constituent Assembly, we shall still say, be it so. Experience is the best teacher and it will show who is right. Let the peasant solve this problem from one end and us from the other. Experience will bring us closer in the general stream of revolutionary creation, in the elaboration of new state forms. We must follow experience; we must allow complete freedom for the creative faculties of the masses. The old government, which was swept away by armed insurrection, tried to settle the land question with the help of the old tsarist bureaucracy, which remained intact. But instead of solving the question the bureaucracy fought the peasants. The peasants have learned something during the eight months of revolution; they want themselves to settle all questions concerning the land. Therefore we declare ourselves opposed to all amendments to this draft law. We want no details in it, for we are writing a decree, not a programme of action. Russia is great, and local conditions vary. We believe that the peasants will be able to solve the problem correctly, better than we could ourselves. Whether in our spirit, or in the spirit of the programme of the Socialist-Revolutionaries is not the point. The point is that the peasants should be firmly assured that there are no more landlords in the countryside, that they must themselves arrange their own lives.

DRAFT STATUTES ON WORKERS' CONTROL

1) Workers' control of the production, warehousing, purchase and sale of all products and raw materials shall be introduced in all industrial, commercial, banking, agricultural and other enterprises employing not less than five workers and employees (together), or with a turnover of not less than 10,000 rubles per annum.

2) Workers' control shall be carried out by all the workers and employees in a given enterprise, either directly, if the enterprise is small enough to permit it, or through their elected delegates, who shall be elected *immediately* at general meetings, at which minutes of the elections shall be taken and the names of those elected communicated to the government and to the local Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

3) Unless permission is given by the elected delegates of the workers and employees, the closing of an enterprise or the cessation of work of state importance (see § 7), or any changes in processes, are absolutely prohibited.

4) The elected delegates shall have access to *all* books and documents and to *all* warehouses and stocks of materials, instruments and products, without exception.

5) The decisions of the elected delegates of the workers and employees are obligatory upon the owners of enterprises and can be annulled only by trade unions and congresses.

6) In enterprises of state importance *all* the owners and *all* the delegates of the workers and employees elected for the purpose of exercising workers' control are answerable to the state for the maintenance of the strictest order and discipline and for the protection of property. Persons guilty of neglect of duty, concealment of stocks, accounts, etc., shall be punished by the confiscation

of the whole of their property and by imprisonment for a period of up to five years.

7) Enterprises of state importance shall be understood to comprise all enterprises working for defence purposes, or in any way connected with the production of articles necessary for the existence of the masses of the population.

8) More detailed regulations on workers' control shall be drawn up by the local Soviets of Workers' Deputies and by conferences of factory and workshop committees, and also by committees of employees, at general meetings of their delegates.

November 8-13 (October 26-31), 1917

FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE RUSSIAN
SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY
(BOLSHEVIKS)

To Comrades Kamenev, Zinoviev, Ryazanov and Larin

THE Central Committee has once already had occasion to deliver an ultimatum to the more prominent representatives of your policy (Kamenev and Zinoviev) demanding complete subordination to the decisions of the Central Committee and to its line and a complete renunciation of the sabotage of its work and of all disorganising activities.

By retiring from the Central Committee but remaining within the Party, the representatives of your policy assumed an obligation to submit to the decisions of the Central Committee. However, not confining yourselves to criticism within the Party, you are introducing indecision into the ranks of the fighters in an insurrection which is still in progress, and are continuing, in defiance of Party discipline, to set at nought, outside our Party—in the Soviets, the municipal bodies, the trade unions, etc.—the decisions of the Central Committee and are hindering its work.

In view of this, the Central Committee is obliged to reiterate its ultimatum and to call upon you either to give an immediate undertaking in writing to submit to the decisions of the Central Committee and to carry out its policy in all your actions, or to retire from all public Party activity and, pending the meeting of the Party Congress, to resign all responsible posts in the working class movement.

Refusal on your part to give one or the other of these undertakings will oblige the Central Committee to raise the question of your immediate expulsion from the Party.

November 18 (5) or 19 (6), 1917

FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE RUSSIAN
SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC PARTY (BOLSHEVIKS)

To All Party Members and to All the Toiling Classes of Russia
COMRADES,

It is common knowledge that the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies has given a majority to the delegates of the Party of the Bolsheviks.

This fact is essential for an understanding of the recent victorious revolution in Petrograd, Moscow and the whole of Russia. Yet this fact is forgotten and ignored by the followers of the capitalists and their unwitting supporters, who are undermining the fundamental principle of the new revolution, namely, *All power to the Soviets*. There must be no other government in Russia than a *Soviet government*. The Soviet power has been won in Russia, and the transfer of government from one Soviet party to another is guaranteed without the necessity for a revolution, by a simple decision of the Soviets, simply by new elections of deputies to the Soviets. The Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets has given a majority to the Party of the Bolsheviks. Therefore, only a government formed by that Party will be a Soviet government. You are all aware that the Central Committee of the Party of the Bolsheviks, several hours prior to the formation of the new government, and before submitting the list of its members to the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets, invited to its session three of the most prominent members of the group of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, Comrades Kamkov, Spiro and Karelin, and *invited them* to join in the new government. We extremely regret that the Left Socialist-Revolutionary comrades refused; we regard such a refusal as impermissible on the part of revolutionaries and champions of the toilers. We are ready at any moment to include Left

Socialist-Revolutionaries in the government, but we declare that, as the party that received the majority at the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets, we are entitled *and are obliged* to form a government.

Everybody knows that the Central Committee of our Party submitted a purely Bolshevik list of People's Commissars to the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets, and that *the Congress approved this list for a purely Bolshevik government.*

Hence the statements to the effect that the Bolshevik government is *not* a Soviet government are absolute lies, and are spread, and can be spread, only by the enemies of the people, the enemies of the Soviet power. On the contrary, now, after the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets, and until the Third Congress is summoned, or until new elections to the Soviets take place, or until a new government is formed by the Central Executive Committee, *only* a Bolshevik government can be regarded as the *Soviet* government.

* *

Comrades, several members of the Central Committee of our Party and of the Council of People's Commissars—Kameney, Zinoviev, Nogin, Rykov, Milyutin and a few others—yesterday, November 17 (4), resigned from the Central Committee of our Party, and the three last named from the Council of People's Commissars. In a large party like ours, notwithstanding the proletarian and revolutionary line of our policy, it is inevitable that individual comrades should be found who do not possess the firmness and determination required in the struggle against the enemies of the people. The tasks that now face our Party are indeed vast, the difficulties are enormous, and certain members of our Party who formerly occupied responsible posts flinched in face of the pressure of the bourgeoisie and fled from our ranks. The bourgeoisie and their supporters are jubilant over this fact and are maliciously rejoicing, prating of collapse and predicting the fall of the Bolshevik government.

Comrades, do not believe these lies. The comrades who have left us have acted like deserters, since they not only quitted the posts entrusted to them, but violated the direct decision of the

Central Committee of our Party, which enjoined them to delay their resignation at least until a decision be taken by the Petrograd and Moscow Party organisations. We vigorously condemn this desertion. We are profoundly convinced that all class conscious workers, soldiers and peasants, who belong to or who sympathise with our Party, will condemn the acts of the deserters with equal vigour.

But we declare that not for one minute, and not in one iota, can the desertion of certain individuals belonging to the leading ranks of our Party shake the unity of the *masses* who support our Party, and it therefore cannot shake our Party.

Remember, comrades, that two of the deserters, Kamenev and Zinoviev, acted as deserters and strike-breakers even before the insurrection in Petrograd, for they not only voted against the insurrection at the decisive meeting of the Central Committee on October 23 (10), 1917, but even *after* the decision had been taken by the Central Committee they addressed Party workers, agitating against the insurrection. It is common knowledge that at that time newspapers which fear to take the side of the workers and are inclined more to the side of the bourgeoisie (e.g., *Novaya Zhizn*), in common with the whole bourgeois press, raised the cry that our Party was disintegrating, that the insurrection was collapsing, and so on. But events swiftly refuted the lies and slanders of some and the doubts, waverings and cowardice of others. The storm they tried to raise around the efforts of Kamenev and Zinoviev to prevent the Petrograd insurrection proved to be *a storm in a teacup*, and the great enthusiasm of the masses, the great heroism of millions of workers, soldiers and peasants in Petrograd, in Moscow, at the front, in the trenches and in the villages, swept the deserters aside as easily as a railway train brushes splinters aside.

Shame, therefore, on all faint-hearts, waverers and doubters, on all who allow themselves to be intimidated by the bourgeoisie or who succumb to the outcries of its direct and indirect supporters. *There is not the slightest hesitation* among the *mass* of the workers and soldiers of Petrograd, Moscow and other places. Our Party stands solidly and firmly, like one man, in defence of the Soviet

power, in defence of the interests of the toilers and first and foremost of the workers and poor peasants.

The chorus of bourgeois scribes and of those who allow themselves to be intimidated by the bourgeoisie accuse us of being uncompromising, of being irreconcilable, of refusing to share power with another party. That is not true, comrades. *We have invited* and continue to invite the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries to share the power with us. It is not our fault that *they have refused*. We began the negotiations, and, after the Second Congress of Soviets had dispersed, we made all kinds of concessions in the course of these negotiations, even to the extent of provisionally agreeing to admit representatives of a section of the Petrograd City Duma, that nest of Kornilovists, which will be the first to be wiped out by the people should the rascally Kornilovists, the darling sons of the capitalists and landlords, the *Junkers*, attempt once more to oppose the will of the people, as they did last Sunday in Petrograd, and as they would like to do again (as is proved by the exposure of the Purishkevich conspiracy and the documents seized on him yesterday, November 16 [3]). But the gentlemen who stand behind the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and are using them in the interests of the bourgeoisie interpreted our readiness to make concessions as weakness and presented us with new ultimatums. At the conference on November 16 (3) Messrs. Abramovich and Martov appeared and presented an ultimatum: there would be no negotiations until our government put a stop to the arrests and the suppression of the bourgeois newspapers.

Both our Party and the Central Executive Committee of the Congress of Soviets *refused* to accept this ultimatum, which obviously emanates from the supporters of Kaledin, the bourgeoisie, Kerensky and Kornilov. The conspiracy of Purishkevich and the appearance in Petrograd on November 18 (5) of a delegation from a division of the 17th Army Corps bringing threats of an advance on Petrograd (a ridiculous threat, for the advance detachments of the Kornilovists were beaten and took to flight at Gatchina, while a large number of them have refused to act against the Soviets) have proved who were the *real* authors of the

ultimatum of Abramovich and Martov and whom these people were *really* serving.

Therefore let the toilers remain confident and resolute! Never will our Party submit to the ultimatum of the minority in the Soviets, a minority that has allowed itself to be intimidated by the bourgeoisie and which in spite of its "good intentions" is virtually a puppet in the hands of the Kornilovists.

We stand firmly for the principle of the Soviet power, *i.e.*, the power of the *majority* obtained at the last Congress of Soviets. We were willing, and *remain willing*, to share the power with the minority of the Soviets, provided that minority loyally and honestly undertake: to submit to the majority and carry out the programme *approved by the whole* Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets, consisting of gradual, but firm and undeviating measures towards socialism. But we shall not submit to any ultimatums of groups of intellectuals who are not backed by the masses, and who *in actual fact* are backed only by the Kornilovists, the Savinkovists, the *Junkers*, and so forth.

Therefore let the toilers remain confident and resolute! Our Party, the party of the Soviet majority, stands solid and united in defence of their interests, and, as heretofore, at the back of our Party stand the millions of the workers in the cities, the soldiers in the trenches and the peasants in the villages, resolved at all costs to bring about the triumph of peace and the triumph of socialism!

November 17-19 (4-6), 1917

TO THE POPULATION

COMRADES—Workers, Soldiers, Peasants and all Toilers,

The workers' and peasants' revolution has finally triumphed in Petrograd and has dispersed and arrested the last remnants of the small number of Cossacks who were deceived by Kerensky. The revolution has triumphed in Moscow too. Before the troop trains dispatched from Petrograd could arrive, the *Junkers* and the other Kornilovists in Moscow had already signed terms of peace, namely, that the *Junkers* should be disarmed and the Committee of Public Safety dissolved.

News is arriving daily and hourly from the front and from the villages to the effect that the vast majority of the soldiers in the trenches and the peasants in the rural districts are supporting the new government and its laws, which provide for peace and the immediate transfer of the land to the peasants. The triumph of the revolution of the workers and peasants is guaranteed, for the majority of the people are already supporting it.

It is, of course, obvious that the landlords and capitalists and the higher-placed employees and officials, who are closely bound up with the bourgeoisie, in a word all the rich and the hangers-on of the rich, are meeting the new revolution with hostility, are resisting its victory, threatening to stop the functioning of the banks, injuring and stopping the work of various institutions, interfering with it and hindering it in every possible way, now directly, now indirectly. Every class conscious worker perfectly well understands that such resistance is inevitable; the Bolshevik Party press has pointed it out frequently. The toiling classes will not allow themselves to be intimidated even for a minute by this resistance, and will not be deterred one jot by the threats and strikes of the supporters of the bourgeoisie.

The majority of the people are with us. The majority of the

toilers and the oppressed of the whole world are with us. Justice is on our side. Our victory is certain.

The resistance of the capitalists and the higher ranks of the employees will be smashed. Not a single person will be deprived of his property except by a specific law of the state providing for the nationalisation of the banks and the syndicates. This law is being drawn up. Not a single toiler or worker will lose a penny; on the contrary, he will receive assistance. The strictest accountancy and control, the collection of taxes already established—the government does not desire to introduce any other measures.

On behalf of these just demands the vast majority of the people have rallied around the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government.

Comrades toilers, remember that *you yourselves* are now governing the state. Nobody will help you unless you unite and take *all the affairs* of the state *into your own hands*. Your Soviets are now the organs of state power, organs with full competence to decide all questions.

Rally around your Soviets. Consolidate them. Set about the work from below without waiting for anybody. Establish the strictest revolutionary order; mercilessly suppress all attempts at anarchy on the part of drunkards, hooligans, counter-revolutionary *Junkers*, Kornilovists and the like.

Introduce the strictest control over production and account of products. Arrest and hand over to the revolutionary court of the people everyone who dares to do injury to the cause of the people, whether by sabotaging (damaging, interfering with, or disorganising) production, or by concealing supplies of grain and food products, or by holding up consignments of grain, or by disorganising the railway, postal, telegraph and telephone services, or by any kind of resistance to the great cause of peace, the transfer of the land to the peasants and the establishment of workers' control over production and distribution.

Comrades workers, soldiers, peasants and all toilers! Put the *entire* power of government into the hands of your Soviets. Cherish and protect the land, grain, factories, implements, products and transport like the apple of your eye—all these are henceforth

entirely yours, the property of the whole people. Gradually, with the consent and approval of the majority of the peasants, and on the basis of their *practical* experience and the experience of the workers, we shall march firmly and undeviatingly to the triumph of socialism, which will be consolidated by the advanced workers of the more civilised countries and which will bring the peoples a lasting peace and emancipate them from all forms of oppression and exploitation.

V. ULYANOV (LENIN)

*Chairman of the Council of People's
Commissars*

November 18 (5), 1917
Petrograd

SPEECH ON THE AGRARIAN QUESTION

*Delivered at the Extraordinary Congress of Soviets
of Peasants' Deputies, November 27 (14) 1917*

PRESS REPORT

ACTING upon instructions of the Bolshevik fraction, Lenin delivered a speech setting forth the views of the Bolshevik Party on the agrarian question.

The party of Socialist-Revolutionaries, he said, has suffered defeat over the agrarian question, since it preached the confiscation of the landed estates, but refused to carry it into effect.

Landed proprietorship forms the basis of feudal oppression, and the confiscation of the landed estates is the first step of the revolution in Russia. But the land question cannot be settled apart from the other tasks of the revolution. A correct view of these problems can be derived from an analysis of the stages through which the revolution has passed. The first step was the overthrow of the autocracy and the establishment of the power of the bourgeoisie and the landlords. The interests of the landlords were closely interwoven with the interests of the bourgeoisie and the banks. The second stage was the consolidation of the Soviets and a policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie. The mistake of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries was that at that time they failed to oppose the policy of compromise on the plea that the masses were not sufficiently educated. A party is the vanguard of a class, and its duty is to lead the masses, not to reflect the average state of mind of the masses. But in order to lead the vacillating, we must stop vacillating ourselves.

Comrades Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, in July a phase started in which the masses of the people began to break away from the policy of compromise, but to this very day the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries are stretching out a hand to the Avksentyevs, while

offering the workers only a finger. If compromise continues, the revolution is doomed. Only if the peasantry supports the workers can the problems of the revolution be solved. Compromise is an attempt on the part of the masses of the workers, peasants and soldiers to secure the satisfaction of their wants by means of reforms, by concessions on the part of capital, without a socialist revolution. But it is impossible to give the people peace and land without overthrowing the bourgeoisie, without socialism. It is the duty of the revolution to put an end to compromise, and to put an end to compromise means adopting the path of socialism.

Lenin went on to defend the instructions to the volost Committees and spoke of the necessity of breaking with the leading organs, such as the army committees, the Executive Committee of the Peasants' Deputies, etc. We took our law on the volost Committees, he said, from the peasants. The peasants want land and the prohibition of hired labour; they want implements for the cultivation of the soil. And this cannot be obtained without overthrowing capital. We tell them: You want land; but the land is mortgaged and belongs to Russian and world capital. You are throwing down a challenge to capital, but are following a different path from us; but we are at one with you in that we are marching, and must march, towards the social revolution. As regards the Constituent Assembly, the speaker said that its work will depend on the mood of the country. But I say: Trust in the mood, but don't forget your rifles.

Lenin went on to deal with the question of the war. When he referred to the removal of Dukhonin and the appointment of Krylenko as Commander-in-Chief of the forces, there was laughter among the audience. It may be funny to you, he retorted, but the soldiers will condemn you for this laughter. If there are individuals here who think it funny that we removed a counter-revolutionary general and appointed Krylenko, who is against the general and has gone to conduct negotiations, we have nothing to say to those individuals. We have nothing in common with those who do not recognise the necessity of fighting the counter-revolutionary generals. We prefer to retire from power, if necessary go underground, rather than have anything to do with such people.

DRAFT RESOLUTION SUBMITTED TO THE EXTRAOR-
DINARY CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF
PEASANTS' DEPUTIES

THE Peasant Congress completely and wholeheartedly supports the Law (Decree) on the Land of November 8 (October 26), 1917, which was approved by the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and promulgated by the Council of People's Commissars, acting as the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of the Russian Republic. The Peasant Congress expresses its firm and inflexible determination to carry this law into effect, and calls upon all peasants unanimously to support it and immediately put it into practice themselves in the localities. It also calls upon the peasants to elect to all responsible posts and positions only people who have proved, not in word, but in deed, their complete devotion to the interests of the toiling and exploited peasants and their readiness and ability to defend those interests against every attempt at resistance on the part of the landlords and capitalists and their followers and supporters.

At the same time, the Peasant Congress expresses the conviction that the complete realisation of all the measures constituting the Land Law is possible only provided that the workers' socialist revolution, begun on November 7 (October 25), is successful; for only a socialist revolution is capable of securing the transfer of the land to the toiling peasantry without compensation, the confiscation of the farm property of the landlords, and the full protection of the interests of the agricultural wage labourers, as well as the immediate beginning of the abolition of the whole system of capitalist wage slavery, the just and systematic distribution of the products of agriculture and the products of industry among

the regions and the inhabitants of the state, mastery over the banks (without which mastery over the land on the part of the people is unthinkable, even with the abolition of private property in land), the fullest possible aid by the state to the toilers and exploited, and so on.

Accordingly, the Peasant Congress, wholeheartedly supporting the revolution of November 7 (October 25), and supporting it for the very reason that it is a socialist revolution, expresses its inflexible determination to carry out by duly gradual stages, but without hesitation, measures for the socialist transformation of the Russian Republic.

An essential condition for the victory of the socialist revolution, which alone can guarantee the lasting success and complete realisation of the Land Law, is the closest alliance between the toiling and exploited peasantry and the working class—the proletariat—in all advanced countries. The whole structure and administration of the state, from top to bottom, must henceforth in the Russian Republic be based upon such an alliance. Rejecting each and every attempt, direct and indirect, open or covert, to return to the policy, condemned by experience, of compromise with the bourgeoisie and with those who carry out the policy of the bourgeoisie, such an alliance is alone capable of securing the triumph of socialism throughout the world.

November 28 (15), 1917

AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE WORKERS AND THE TOILING AND EXPLOITED PEASANTS

A LETTER TO PRAVDA

TODAY, Saturday, December 1 (November 18), in the course of my speech at the Peasant Congress, I was publicly asked a question to which I forthwith replied. It is essential that this question and my reply should immediately be made known to all the reading public, for, while formally speaking only in my own name, I was in fact speaking in the name of the whole Bolshevik Party.

The matter was as follows.

Touching upon the question of an alliance between the Bolshevik workers and the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, whom many peasants at present trust, I attempted to show in my speech that the alliance *can* be an "honest coalition," an honest alliance, for *there is no* radical divergence between the interests of the wage workers and the interests of the toiling and exploited peasants. Socialism is *fully* able to satisfy the interests of both. And *only* socialism can satisfy their interests. Hence the possibility and necessity for an "honest coalition" between the proletarians and the toiling and exploited peasantry. On the other hand, a "coalition" between the toiling and exploited classes on the one hand and the bourgeoisie on the other *cannot* be an "honest coalition" because of the fundamental divergence of interests of these classes.

Imagine, I said, that there will be in the government a majority of Bolsheviks and a minority of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, or let us say, only one Left Socialist-Revolutionary, the Commissar for Agriculture. Could the Bolsheviks in such circumstances practise an honest coalition?

They could; for, while they are irreconcilable in their fight against the counter-revolutionary elements (including the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and the defencists), the Bolsheviks would be obliged to *abstain* from voting on questions concerning purely Socialist-Revolutionary points in the land programme approved by the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets. Such a point, for instance, would be the principle of equal land tenure and the redistribution of land among the small peasants.

By abstaining from voting on such a point the Bolsheviks would not in any way be changing their programme. For, given the triumph of socialism (workers' control over the factories, to be followed by their expropriation, the nationalisation of the banks, and the creation of a supreme economic council for the regulation of the whole economic life of the country), given that, the workers *would be obliged to agree* to the transitional measures proposed by the small toiling and exploited peasants, provided such measures were not detrimental to the cause of socialism. Kautsky, when he was still a Marxist (from 1899 to 1909) frequently admitted—I said—that the transitional measures to socialism cannot be identical in countries of large-scale and in countries of small-scale agriculture.

We Bolsheviks would be obliged to abstain when such a point was being voted in the Council of People's Commissars or in the Central Executive Committee, for, if the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries (and the peasants who support them) agreed to workers' control, to the nationalisation of the banks, etc., equal land tenure would be only one of the *transitional* measures to complete socialism. It would be absurd for the proletariat to *impose* such transitional measures; it is its duty, in the interests of the triumph of socialism, to *give way* to the small toiling and exploited peasants in the choice of these transitional measures, since they can do *no harm* to the cause of socialism.

Thereupon, a Left Socialist-Revolutionary (if I am not mistaken, it was Comrade Feofilaktov) asked me the following question:

"How would the Bolsheviks act if in the Constituent Assembly the peasants wanted to carry through a law on equal land tenure, while the bourgeoisie were opposed to the peasants and the decision therefore depended on the Bolsheviks?"

I replied: In such circumstances, when the cause of socialism would be assured by the introduction of workers' control, the nationalisation of the banks, etc., the alliance between the workers and the toiling and exploited peasants would oblige the party of the proletariat to vote for the peasants and against the bourgeoisie. The Bolsheviks, in my opinion, would be entitled when the vote was being taken to make a declaration of dissent, to record their non-agreement; but to hold back under such circumstances would be to betray their allies *in the fight for socialism* for the sake of a difference with them on a particular issue. Never would the Bolsheviks betray the peasants in such a situation. Equal land tenure, and like measures, cannot injure socialism, provided the power is in the hands of a workers' and peasants' government, provided workers' control has been established, the banks nationalised, a workers' and peasants' supreme economic organ created to direct (regulate) the whole of the economic life of the country, and so forth.

Such was my reply.

December 1 (November 18), 1917

SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE SECOND ALL-RUSSIAN
CONGRESS OF PEASANTS' DEPUTIES,
DECEMBER 15 (2), 1917

COMRADES, at the last Extraordinary Congress of Peasants' Deputies I appeared as a member of the Bolshevik fraction and not as a member of the Council of People's Commissars. I appear in the same capacity now, for I consider it important that the opinion of the Party of the Bolsheviks should be known to this congress of peasants' deputies.

When I arrived here I heard a part of the speech of the last speaker, who, turning to me, told you that I wanted to disperse you at the point of the bayonet. Comrades, Russia has grown beyond the point where any person can govern her. You know that from the moment the army turned their weapons for the conquest of freedom, from the moment it became possible for the peasants clad in soldier's uniform to meet and arrange matters with peasants not clad in soldier's uniform, from that moment there has been no force that can tame the will of the people, the will of the peasants and workers.

Comrades, I want to tell you how we understand the revolution of November 7 (October 25). Comrades, it has been stated here that a new wave of revolution may sweep the Soviets away. I say that cannot be. I am firmly convinced that the Soviets will never perish; that has been proved by the revolution of November 7 (October 25). The Soviets will never perish, for they were formed even in the first Revolution of 1905; they were formed after the February Revolution, and were formed not upon anybody's personal initiative, but by the will of the masses of the people, from below. There can be no limitations, no formalities here, for they have been formed by the will of the people, and the people are free to recall their representatives at any moment. The Soviets are superior to any parliament, they are superior to any Constituent Assembly. [*Commotion and cries: That's a lie!*] The Party of the Bolsheviks has always declared that the supreme body is

the Soviets. That cannot be called a lie, because the revolutions which occurred in Europe and which overthrew the monarchy formed bourgeois republics with the help of Constituent Assemblies. Such a revolution as has taken place in our country has never occurred anywhere else before. It is said that the revolution of November 7 (October 25) created only "a Bolshevik government." I might say that there are not only Bolsheviks in the Council of People's Commissars. Those of you who remember the First Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies will know that the Bolsheviks were then in the minority; but, having learned by experience whither the policy of compromise would lead, the people at the Second Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies gave a majority to the Party of the Bolsheviks. When they tell me, and shout from the hostile press, that bayonets may be directed against the Soviets, I simply laugh. The bayonets are in the hands of the workers, the soldiers and the peasants, and while in their hands they will never be directed against the Soviets. Let the counter-revolution turn the bayonets on the Soviets, they bear no terrors for them.

Passing to the question of the Constituent Assembly, I must say that the Constituent Assembly can help only if the people themselves are free to develop and build up a new life. And I ask you: Is that the case?

I am telling you what you all know: "Man is not made for the sabbath, but the sabbath for man." Comrades, you know how the elections to the Constituent Assembly took place. That is one of the most advanced methods of election, for it is not individuals who are elected, but representatives of parties. And that is a step forward, for revolutions are made by parties and not by individuals. When the elections to the Constituent Assembly took place there was only one party of Socialist-Revolutionaries, the party which has the majority in the Constituent Assembly. But that is not the case now. You will perhaps say that the Bolsheviks also brought that about. No, comrades, that is a world-wide law. Always and everywhere, the people are slowly and painfully dividing into two camps: the camp of the dispossessed and down-trodden, the camp of those who are fighting for a brighter future for all the toilers, and the camp of those who in one way or an-

other support the landlords and capitalists. When the elections took place the people did not elect those who expressed their will and their desires. You say that we have declared the whole Cadet Party enemies of the people. Yes, we have. And thereby we expressed the will of the Second Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. And now that we are on the threshold of peace and the cessation of the frightful slaughter that has lasted three years, we are convinced that it is the demand of all the toilers of all countries. The overthrow of imperialism in Europe is proceeding slowly and painfully, and imperialists in all countries will now see that the people are strong, and in their strength will overthrow all who stand in their way. We shall not be deterred when people who are organising revolt against the workers and peasants, against the Soviets, point with their other hand to the high mandate of the Constituent Assembly. In July we were told that we should be denounced as enemies of the people. And we answered, "Try it." If the bourgeois gentlemen and their followers had only tried to say that to the people openly! But they did not; they resorted to insinuation, slander and mud-slinging. When the bourgeoisie began the civil war (we witnessed it), they incited the *Junkers* to revolt. But we, the victors, were merciful to them, the vanquished. Ay, more, we even preserved their military honour. And now, when the Constituent Assembly is being convened, we say: We shall open the Constituent Assembly when four hundred of its members arrive. We see that the conspiracy of the Cadets is continuing, we see that they are organising a revolt against the Soviets in the interests of the moneybags, of greed and riches. We publicly denounce them as enemies of the people. At a time when the terms of peace will shortly be known, when we are about to have an armistice, when the members of the Land Committees are immune from arrest, when the landed estates will be confiscated, and when control will be established over the factories and workshops—at such a time they are conspiring against us, against the Soviets. We therefore declare that the party of the Cadets is a party of the bourgeoisie, that they are enemies of the people, and that we shall fight them.

**DRAFT OF A MANIFESTO TO THE PEASANTRY FROM THE
SECOND ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF PEASANTS'
DEPUTIES**

THE Second All-Russian Peasant Congress earnestly appeals to the peasantry of all the nations and peoples of Russia to bend their mind and their will, the power of their numbers and their energy, in order to arouse the sleepers and to encourage the irresolute and, from every corner of the country, from every village and from every quarter of the large cities, to utter aloud, so that all may hear, their weighty and decisive word at this, perhaps the most serious and most responsible moment of the Great Russian Revolution.

Comrades peasants, we constitute the overwhelming majority of the population of our country. We are the vast mass of the toilers and the exploited. We are the vast mass of the fighters on behalf of the lawful and just demands of the toilers—first and foremost the demand for land—the fighters against all forms of oppression and exploitation on the part of both the landlords and the capitalists.

Comrades peasants, we are the vast mass of our army, to whose lot has fallen the inhuman suffering of more than three years of the war instigated by the tsars and the capitalists; to whose lot has also fallen the difficult but thankful and honourable role of being—together with the workers—vanguard fighters for freedom, land and peace, and for the complete emancipation of the toilers from all forms of oppression and exploitation.

Comrades peasants, consider our manifesto, our appeal, issued by the deputies of the peasants to the peasants of all the nations of Russia. Make known our appeal in every village and in every cottage; discuss it at every meeting and village assembly and in

every peasant institution, without exception; and in the localities make your own firm and unshakable decisions. For it is on your decisions, on the decisions of the majority of the people, the decisions of the peasants themselves, that the fate of our native land mostly depends.

The fateful hour is approaching. The last fight is at hand. The whole country, all the nations of our republic, has been divided into two great camps. One camp is that of the landlords and capitalists, the rich and their servitors, the state dignitaries and their friends, the commanders of the nation and the supporters of the war.

The other camp is that of the workers and the toiling and exploited peasants, the poor people and their friends, the rank-and-file soldiers and the supporters of peace, the advocates of a heroic, decisive and bold revolutionary struggle for peace, a struggle in which no mercy will be shown to the oppressors of the people.

The struggle between these two camps has in certain parts of the country already assumed the form of open and direct civil war, a war of the Soviet armies against a small handful who are relying on the power of wealth, and who desire to overthrow the Soviet power, the power and government of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

Comrades peasants, on your determined, unshakable and momentous word much will now depend: on it depends the cessation of this civil war; on it depends the possibility of the peaceful transfer in Russia of all the land to the toilers, without compensation; on it depends the triumph of socialism. Comrades peasants, rise like one man; lift up your voice; announce your demands; draw up your own Instructions in every village. You can make yourselves heard; you will compel them all to hear you!

Comrades peasants, you must in the first place declare your decided condemnation of those deputies to the Second All-Russian Peasants' Congress *who broke away from the Congress*. Condemn those splitters. Condemn the destroyers of the unity of the peasantry, the unity of the toiling people, the unity of the peasants and the workers. An outrageous crime has been committed by

these splitters, these destroyers of the unity of the peasantry, these deserters to the camp of the rich, to the camp of the landlords and the capitalists. These people call themselves "Socialist-Revolutionaries" of the Right Wing and the Centre, the followers of Avksentyev and Chernov. They have betrayed the whole doctrine and programme of the Socialist-Revolutionaries; they have deserted to the enemies of socialism, to the throttlers of the revolution. They have broken with the loyal guardians of the doctrine, programme and demands of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the party of the "Left Socialist-Revolutionary Internationalists," who have remained loyal to the interests of the toiling peasantry. They, these followers of Avksentyev and Chernov, have left the Second All-Russian Peasants' Congress and refused to submit to the decision of the majority of the peasants, in order that they may carry out the will of the wealthy and the capitalists against the peasants, in order to hinder the cause of peace, in order to prevent the immediate transfer of the land, without compensation, to the toiling people, and in order to preserve the policy of Avksentyev, Chernov, Maslov and their like, which is fatal to the peasants.

Utter your condemnation of these traitors to the cause of the peasants. By condemning them, you will save many of the weak and wavering, and you will save Russia from insane attempts at civil war. Insane, because, apart from shedding rivers of blood, they will change nothing; nothing in the world can break the unanimous decision of the workers, soldiers and peasants, the decision of the Second All-Russian Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and of the Second All-Russian Congress of Peasants' Deputies.

Utter your condemnation of these traitors to the cause of the peasants. Let every village express its confidence in the decisions of these two Congresses, the Congresses of the Soviets of the workers, the soldiers and the peasants. Let every village *recall* from the Constituent Assembly those deputies from the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, or from the Peasants' Soviets and institutions, who have not loudly proclaimed, and proved in practice, their wholehearted recognition of these decisions.

Comrades peasants, you all know that opponents of the deci-

sions of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and of the Second All-Russian Congress of Peasants' Deputies could be elected, and were elected, from the peasants to the Constituent Assembly *only by misrepresentation*. These people, who often call themselves Socialist-Revolutionaries, actually defrauded the peasants, who as yet did not know the truth regarding the policy of Avksentyev, Chernov and Maslov, a policy of making concessions to the landlords, of compromising with the capitalists, and of arresting the members of the local peasants' Land Committees. These Avksentyevs, Maslovs and Chernovs deceived the peasants, since the general lists of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party were compiled before October 30 (17), whereas the truth became revealed to the whole of Russia only after October 30 (17).

It was the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies that on November 7-8 (October 25-26), 1917, revealed the truth to the whole of Russia. The truth was again revealed by the Soviet power, the Soviet government, which was the first to publish the shameful secret treaties, which was the first to start a real revolutionary struggle for peace, which was the first to show *in action* what that struggle should be, and which has already succeeded in obtaining an armistice on one of the fronts.

The truth was revealed by the Soviet government when it issued the Decree on the Land, thereby unconditionally placing itself on the side of the peasantry and eliminating all possibility of outside interference with the complete power of the peasants in the localities.

The truth has been revealed by the Second All-Russian Peasants' Congress, which was the first to expose to the peasants in a detailed resolution the shameful role of the Executive Committee of the Avksentyevs and Chernovs.¹ The Congress will close on December 21 (8), having begun on December 13 (November 30), 1917.

Comrades peasants, you thus see that when the lists were

¹ I.e., the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies which existed prior to the Second Congress of those deputies.—Ed.

drawn up on October 30 (17) and during the elections to the Constituent Assembly on November 25 (12) the peasants *could not yet* have known the truth as to the land and peace, and *could not yet* distinguish their friends from their enemies, from the wolves in sheep's clothing. You can see that it is *only by fraud* that those Socialist-Revolutionaries who oppose the decisions of the Second All-Russian Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and of the Second All-Russian Congress of Peasants' Deputies can speak in the name of the peasants.

Comrades peasants, do not allow blood to be shed because of this fraud! Raise your voices in determined protest against those who have withdrawn from the Second All-Russian Congress of Peasants' Deputies. Draw up your *Instructions* in every gubernia, in every uyezd, in every volost and in every village; utter your protest against those who have deserted the Congress; *publish the names* of the local deputies of the peasants to the Constituent Assembly who have not adhered to the decisions of these Congresses, and *demand that these deputies shall resign* from the Constituent Assembly; for it is only by deceiving the people that they can pretend to have been elected by the people.

Comrades peasants, the Constituent Assembly must express the will of the people. Those who have withdrawn from the Second All-Russian Congress of Peasants' Deputies, who thwarted its will, who caused a split among the peasants and who deserted the peasants for the rich, are not the elected of the people. They are traitors, and there is no place for them in the Constituent Assembly. They bring, not peace nor land for the toilers: they bring the people the insane and criminal indignation of the rich against the Soviet power. The people will not tolerate deceit. The people will not allow their will to be frustrated. The people will not surrender the Soviet power to please the rich. The people will not allow the rich to lacerate the cause of *peace* they have espoused, the cause of the transfer of the *land* to the toilers, immediately, without exception, without compensation.

Only two alternatives face the country:

Either a civil war against the Soviet power on the part of the Kaledinites, the Cadets, the Kornilovists (and their concealed al-

lies, the Avksentyevs, the Chernovs and the Maslovs), a bloody war, a hopeless war for its initiators, a war that will not deprive the Soviets of power, but will only engender greater fury, be the cause of greater sacrifices, the shedding of more blood, greater delay in carrying through the great socialist reforms, and greater famine in the grainless provinces;

Or honest recognition of the truth which is apparent to all, namely, that the opponents of the decisions of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and of the Second All-Russian Congress of Peasants' Deputies could have secured election to the Constituent Assembly by the peasants only by fraud, and that therefore such deputies *must submit to new elections*.

There is no other alternative. Either the bloody annihilation of the rich, the Avksentyevs, the Chernovs and the Maslovs, or their consent to new elections of peasants' deputies to the Constituent Assembly as soon as the peasant opponents of the decisions of the two Soviet Congresses, the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies and the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, utter their opinion in the Constituent Assembly.

The decision lies with you, comrades peasants!

The final decision lies with you.

The resolute utterance of *all* the peasants, *the Instructions of all the peasants from the localities*, can bring peace to the whole country, to all the nations of Russia, can stop the civil war, can guarantee not a sham, but a genuine Constituent Assembly, can accelerate and facilitate the cessation of the war by a just peace and the transfer of the land to the toilers, can strengthen the alliance between the peasants and the workers and hasten the triumph of socialism:

The decision lies with you, comrades peasants! Long live the transfer of the land to the toilers! Long live peace! Long live socialism!

THE SECOND ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS
OF PEASANTS' DEPUTIES

December 19-20 (6-7), 1917

SPEECH ON THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND ON THE ARREST OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CADET PARTY

*Delivered to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee
at its Session of December 14 (1), 1917*

EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES

CONSIDERED apart from the circumstances of the class war, which has become a civil war, we have not yet known of a more perfect institution for determining the will of the people than the Constituent Assembly. But we must not indulge in fancies. The Constituent Assembly will have to function under the circumstances of a civil war. It was the Kaledin bourgeois elements that started the civil war.

After attempting to drag out the insurrection in Moscow, after the unsuccessful attempt on the part of Kerensky to bring troops against Petrograd, after the fruitless attempt to organise the counter-revolutionary commanding ranks of the army, they are now endeavouring to organise an uprising on the Don. The attempt is hopeless, since the toiling Cossacks are opposed to the Kaledinites.

Replying to the charge of persecuting the Cadet Party, Lenin declared that the class struggle cannot be regarded detached from one's political opponents. When it is said that the Cadet Party is not a strong group, it is not true. The Cadet Central Committee is the political general staff of the bourgeois class. The Cadets have absorbed the propertied classes: elements have fused with them that stood to the Right of the Cadets. They all support the Cadet Party.

We are being called upon to convene the Constituent Assembly in the form in which it was first planned. No, I beg your pardon. It was planned against the people. We made the revolution in order to have guarantees that the Constituent Assembly shall not be used against the people, and in order that these guarantees

shall be in the hands of the government. Our decree states clearly and unambiguously when the Constituent Assembly will be convened. It contains an exact answer to that question. Do not indulge in thought-reading; we are concealing nothing. We said that we shall convene the Constituent Assembly when four hundred members arrive. We are not to blame that the elections took place later than the appointed time. In certain localities the Soviets themselves appointed later election dates. Since the elections were held on various dates, it became necessary to determine how many deputies are required in order to open the Constituent Assembly. There was an attempt to take advantage of the fact that the number is not indicated in the law, in order to convene the Constituent Assembly irrespective of the number of deputies present. What would be the position of a government that permitted such a thing? The Soviet government was right in decreeing the number of deputies required in order that the Constituent Assembly might be deemed properly constituted. That is what the Soviet government did. Those who are not in agreement should criticise the decree. But when instead of criticism we hear insinuations and guesses, we brush them aside.

When a revolutionary class is fighting the propertied classes and the latter show resistance, that resistance must be crushed. And we shall crush the resistance of the propertied classes, using all those means with the help of which they crushed the proletariat. No other means have been invented.

You said the bourgeoisie should be isolated. But the Cadets, under cover of a formally democratic demand, the demand for a Constituent Assembly, in fact started civil war. They say: We want to sit in the Constituent Assembly and at the same time organise civil war. And to that you reply by talk of isolation.

We are not merely persecuting violators of formalities: we are bringing direct political accusations against a political party. That is the way the French revolutionaries acted. It is our reply to those peasants who elected without knowing whom they were electing. Let the people know that the Constituent Assembly is being summoned not quite in the way Kerensky intended. We have introduced the right of recall, and the Constituent Assembly

will not be quite the thing the bourgeoisie planned. While only a few days remain before the Constituent Assembly is summoned, the bourgeoisie is organising civil war, intensifying sabotage and undermining the armistice. We shall not let ourselves be deceived by formal slogans. They would like to sit in the Constituent Assembly and at the same time organise civil war. Let them give their reasoned arguments in refutation of our accusation against the Cadet Party: let them prove that the Cadet Party is not the general staff of the civil war, an obviously hopeless war that is drenching the country in blood. . . . Comrade Steinberg has not attempted to prove that. He has forgotten all that was revealed regarding the contacts between the Cadets and Kornilov; it was not we, but Chernov, our political opponent, who revealed those contacts. We are advised to catch the little fellow. We shall not disguise our political accusation against the general staff of a whole class by hunting for particular individuals. . . .

Lenin then dealt with the rejoinder that the Bolsheviks were also proclaimed enemies of the people. They threatened to proclaim us enemies of the people, he said, but they did not. They did not dare. We said to them at that time: Well, if you can, try it; try to tell the people that the Bolshevik Party, as a party, as a tendency, is the enemy of the people. They did not dare; they hunted particular individuals, they conducted a campaign of calumny. We said: You cannot proclaim us enemies of the people; you have not a single objection in principle to bring against the Bolsheviks; all you can do is to spread calumnies. Our accusation against the Cadet Party puts an end to the petty manoeuvres of political struggle. We shall tell the people the truth. We shall tell the people that their interests are superior to the interests of any democratic institution. We must not return to the old prejudices, which subordinate the interests of the people to formal democracy. The Cadets cry, All power to the Constituent Assembly. But what they mean in fact is, All power to Kaledin. The people must be told that, and the people will approve our action.

December 19 (6), 1917

NOTE TO F. E. DZERZHINSKY

COMRADE DZERZHINSKY,

In connection with your report today regarding the methods of fighting saboteurs and counter-revolutionaries.

Would it not be possible to put through a decree *like the following?*

On Fighting Counter-Revolutionaries and Saboteurs

The bourgeoisie, the landlords and all the rich classes are making desperate efforts to undermine the revolution, the aim of which is to safeguard the interests of the workers, the toiling and exploited masses.

The bourgeoisie is prepared to commit the most heinous crimes; it is bribing the outcast and degraded elements of society and organising them for pogroms. The supporters of the bourgeoisie, particularly among the higher employees, bank officials, and so on, are sabotaging, and are organising strikes in order to thwart the government's measures for the realisation of socialist reforms. They have even gone so far as to sabotage food distribution, thereby menacing millions of people with famine.

Special measures are necessary to fight the counter-revolutionaries and saboteurs. In virtue of this necessity, the Soviet of People's Commissars decrees:

1) Persons belonging to the wealthy classes (*i.e.*, with incomes of 500 rubles or more per month, and owners of urban real estate, stocks and shares, or money amounting to over 1,000 rubles), and also all employees of banks, joint stock companies, state and public institutions, shall within three days present to their house committees written statements in three copies signed with their own signatures and indicating their address, income, place of employment and their occupation.

2) The house committees shall countersign these statements, retain one copy and send one copy to the city administration and another to the People's Commissariat for Home Affairs (address:).

3) Persons guilty of non-observance of the present law (failing to make statements, giving false information, etc.) and members of house committees infringing the regulations governing the collection, preservation and presentation of these statements to the institutions mentioned above shall be liable to be fined a sum not exceeding 5,000 rubles for each such infringement, to imprisonment up to one year, or to be sent to the front, depending on the offence.

4) Persons sabotaging the work of, or declining to work in, banks, state and public institutions, joint stock companies, railways, etc., shall be liable to similar punishment.

5) As a first step towards universal labour service, it is decreed that the persons referred to in §1 shall be obliged, first, constantly to carry with them a copy of the above-mentioned declaration certified by the house committees and by their chiefs or elected officials (shop committees, food committees, railway committees, employees' trade unions, etc.); the certificates must indicate what public service or work is being performed by the individual in question, or whether he is living with his family as a non-ablebodied member thereof, etc.

6) Secondly, such persons shall be obliged to acquire within one week from the issue of the present law consumers'-workers' books (specimen attached), in which shall be entered their weekly income and expenditures, and in which entries shall be made, certified by the proper committees or institutions, regarding the public duties performed by the individual in question.

7) Persons who do not come under §1 shall present to their house committees a statement in one copy of their income and place of employment and shall carry with them another copy of this statement certified by the house committee.

December 19-20 (6-7), 1917

DRAFT DECREE ON THE SOCIALISATION OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

THE critical food situation and the danger of famine created by the speculation and sabotage of the capitalists and government officials, as well as the general state of disorganisation, makes it essential to adopt extraordinary revolutionary measures for combating this evil.

In order that all citizens of the state, and particularly the toiling classes, shall take up the fight against this evil immediately and comprehensively, and address themselves to the proper organisation of the economic life of the country, stopping at nothing and acting in the most revolutionary manner, under the leadership of their Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, the following regulations are decreed:

Draft Decree on the Nationalisation of the Banks and the Adoption of the Measures Necessitated Thereby

1) All joint stock companies are declared to be the property of the state.

2) Members of boards and directors of joint stock companies, and also all shareholders belonging to the wealthy classes (i.e., possessing property exceeding 5,000 rubles, or an income exceeding 500 rubles per month) are obliged to continue the systematic conduct of the affairs of these enterprises, observe the law on workers' control, present all shares to the State Bank and submit to the local Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies weekly reports of their activities.

3) State loans, foreign and domestic, are hereby annulled.

4) The interests of small holders of bonds and shares, i.e., holders belonging to the toiling classes of the population, shall be fully protected.

5) Universal labour service is hereby introduced: all citizens of both sexes between the ages of sixteen and fifty-five shall be obliged to perform work assigned to them by the local Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, or by other organs of the Soviet power.

6) As a first step towards the introduction of universal labour service, it is decreed that persons belonging to the wealthy classes (see §2) shall be obliged to possess, and make proper entries in, consumers'-workers' books, or workers' budget books, which must be presented to the competent workers' organisations or to the local Soviets and their organs for weekly notations of the performance of the work undertaken.

7) For the purpose of proper control and distribution of foodstuffs and other necessary products, every citizen of the state shall be obliged to join a consumers' society. The food boards, committees of supply, and similar organisations, and also the railway and transport unions, shall, under the guidance of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, exercise control over the due observation of the present law. Persons belonging to the wealthy classes, in particular, shall be obliged to perform any work assigned to them by the Soviets in the sphere of organising and conducting the affairs of the consumers' societies.

8) The railway employees' unions shall be charged with the duty of urgently drawing up and immediately carrying into effect *extraordinary* measures for the better organisation of transport, particularly as regards the transport of foodstuffs, fuel and other items of prime necessity, being guided by the instructions and orders firstly of the Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies and then of the bodies empowered for this purpose by them and by the Supreme Council of National Economy. Similarly, upon the railway unions, working in conjunction with the local Soviets, shall devolve the duty of energetically combating petty food profiteers and mercilessly suppressing speculation, if necessary resorting to revolutionary measures for this purpose.

9) Workers' organisations, unions of office employees and the local Soviets shall immediately set about placing closed and demobilised enterprises, and also unemployed workers, on the per-

formance of useful work and the production of articles of necessity, finding orders, raw materials and fuel. While under no circumstances postponing the performance of this work, and while likewise proceeding to the exchange of country products for city products without awaiting special instructions on the subject from superior bodies; the local unions and Soviets shall be strictly guided by the orders and instructions of the Supreme Council of National Economy.

10) Members of the wealthy classes shall be obliged to keep all their monetary possessions in the State Bank and its branches, or in the savings banks, withdrawing not more than 100-125 rubles per week (as shall be established by the local Soviets) for living purposes; withdrawals for purposes of production and trade shall be made only with a written certificate of the organs of workers' control.

For the purpose of supervising the due realisation of this present law, regulations shall be drawn up providing for the exchange of the present currency bills for new currency bills. Persons guilty of fraud on the state and the people shall be liable to the confiscation of all their property.

11) Violators of the present law, saboteurs and government officials who go on strike, and also speculators, shall be liable to a similar penalty, and to imprisonment, or to dispatch to the front, or to compulsory labour. The local Soviets and their organs shall with all due speed decide upon the most revolutionary measures to be taken for combating these real enemies of the people.

12) The trade unions and other organisations of the toilers, acting in conjunction with the local Soviets, and with the participation of reliable persons recommended by Party and other organisations, shall organise mobile groups of inspectors to supervise the carrying into effect of the present law, to inspect the quantity and quality of work performed and to bring to trial before the revolutionary courts persons guilty of violating or evading this law.

December 1917

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December 1917

DRAFT DECREE ON CONSUMERS' COMMUNES

THE war, caused by the conflict among the capitalists for the division of the spoils of depredation, has resulted in untold ruin, which has been intensified by criminal speculation and the lust for gain, particularly among the wealthy classes. Hundreds of thousands and even millions of people are as a result suffering the tortures of hunger and unemployment. The need for adopting extraordinary measures in order to aid the starving and to wage merciless war on speculation has induced the workers' and peasants' government to enact the following regulations as a law of the Russian Republic:

Every citizen of the state shall belong to a local consumers' society (village, volost, hamlet, section of town, street, etc.).

The grouping of families in the consumers' societies shall be voluntary, except for the proviso that not less than two-thirds of the number of families in each society must belong to the non-wealthy classes (i.e., workers, peasants not employing hired labour, and so on).

Apart from the purchase and distribution of products, every consumers' society shall engage in the sale of local products. The boards of the consumers' societies shall set up *committees of supply*, and no transportation of products shall be permitted without the written sanction of the appropriate committee of supply.

Existing consumers' societies are hereby nationalised and shall be obliged to admit to membership the whole population of the localities in which they are situated, without exception.

Private individuals may, if they so desire, purchase products not in their local but in the central stores, but only on condition that a corresponding entry is made in the book of the local consumers' society.

The transportation, as well as the purchase and sale, of products without a certificate of the committees of supply shall be punishable by the confiscation of the whole of the property of the offender, by imprisonment for a period of not less than six months and by sentence of compulsory labour.

Certificates sanctioning the transportation or the purchase and sale of products shall be drawn up in duplicate and signed by not less than three members of the board of the appropriate committee of supply; one copy shall be preserved in the files of the board.

Each certificate must state from which and to which consumers' society the products are being consigned.

Telegraph offices shall give priority to the telegrams of the committees of supply.

All committees of supply shall act under the control and in accordance with the instructions of the local Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

Every individual shall be entitled to acquire at his consumers' society any product, without any limitation whatsoever, except for such regulations as may be established for limiting the import of products from abroad.

Products produced for sale must be delivered to the local committee of supply at prevailing prices, except in cases when fixed prices are established by law. Money due in payment for products shall be entered to the account of the owner in the local (village, volost, city, factory or other) branch of the People's Bank.

Every Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies shall be obliged to appoint a group of controllers, auditors and instructors to assist the population in the formation of consumers' societies (committees of supply) and for the supervision of their accounts and of all their operations.

Instructions regarding the conduct of the accounts and correspondence of the committees of supply will be issued separately.

January 7-10, 1918

THESES ON THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

1) The demand for the convocation of a Constituent Assembly was a perfectly legitimate part of the programme of revolutionary Social-Democracy, because in a bourgeois republic a Constituent Assembly represents the highest form of democracy, and because the imperialist republic, with Kerensky at its head, in creating a parliament, was preparing to manipulate the elections and to commit a number of infringements of democracy.

2) While demanding the convocation of a Constituent Assembly, revolutionary Social-Democracy has, from the very beginning of the Revolution of 1917, repeatedly emphasised that a republic of Soviets is a higher form of democracy than the ordinary bourgeois republic with a Constituent Assembly.

3) For the transition from the bourgeois to the socialist order, for the dictatorship of the proletariat, a republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies is not only the form of a higher type of democratic institution (as compared with the ordinary bourgeois republic crowned with a Constituent Assembly), but is the only form capable of securing the most painless transition to socialism.

4) The convocation of the Constituent Assembly in our revolution on the basis of lists submitted at the end (middle) of October 1917 is taking place amidst conditions which preclude the possibility of the elections to this Constituent Assembly faithfully expressing the will of the people in general and of the toiling masses in particular.

5) First, proportional representation results in a faithful expression of the will of the people only when the party lists correspond to the real division among the people actually in accordance with the party groupings which are reflected in those lists. Here, however, as is well known, the party which between

May and October had the largest number of adherents among the people, and especially among the peasantry, *viz.*, the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, presented joint lists for the Constituent Assembly at the end (middle) of October 1917, but split after the elections to the Constituent Assembly, before it was convened.

For this reason, there is not, nor can there be, even formal correlation between the will of the mass of the electors and the composition of the Constituent Assembly.

6) Second, a still more important, not formal, nor legal, but a social-economic class source of the discrepancy between the will of the people and especially of the toiling classes, on the one hand, and the composition of the Constituent Assembly, on the other, is the circumstance that the elections to the Constituent Assembly took place at a time when the overwhelming majority of the people could not yet know the whole extent and significance of the October Soviet proletarian and peasant revolution, which began on November 7 (October 25), 1917, *i.e.*, after the lists of candidates for the Constituent Assembly had been submitted.

7) The October Revolution, which captured power for the Soviets, and which wrested political domination from the hands of the bourgeoisie and transferred it to the hands of the proletariat and poorest peasantry, is passing, under our very eyes, through successive stages of development.

8) It began with the victory of November 6-7 (October 24-25) in the capital, when the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the vanguard of the proletarians, and of the most politically active section of the peasantry, gave a majority to the Bolshevik Party and put it in power.

9) Then, in the course of November and December, the revolution spread to the entire army and the peasantry, and manifested itself, first of all, in the dismissal of the leading bodies (army committees, gubernia and peasant committees, the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, etc.), which expressed the superseded compromising stage of the revolution, its bourgeois and not proletarian stage, and which were inevitably bound to disappear as a result of the pressure of the lower and broader masses of the people, and the election of new ones.

10) This mighty movement of the exploited masses for the reorganisation of the leading bodies of their organisations has really not yet ended—end (middle) of December 1917—and the Railwaymen's Congress, which is still in session, represents one of its stages.

11) Hence, the grouping of the class forces in Russia in the course of the class struggle is in fact assuming an essentially different form in November and December 1917 from the one that could be reflected in the party lists of candidates for the Constituent Assembly that were submitted at the end (middle) of October 1917.

12) Recent events in the Ukraine (partly also in Finland and White Russia, as well as in the Caucasus) similarly reveal a regrouping of the class forces which is taking place in the process of the struggle between the bourgeois nationalism of the Ukrainian Rada, the Finnish Diet, etc., on the one hand, and the Soviet power, the proletarian and peasant revolution in each of these national republics, on the other.

13) Lastly, the civil war which was started by the counter-revolutionary rebellion of the Cadet-Kaledinites against the Soviet authorities, against the workers' and peasants' government, has finally brought the class struggle to an issue and has destroyed all chances of settling the very acute problems which history has set before the peoples of Russia, and more particularly before the Russian working class and peasantry, in a formal democratic way.

14) Only the complete victory of the workers and peasants over the bourgeois and landlord rebellion (which found expression in the Cadet-Kaledinite movement), only the ruthless military suppression of this rebellion of the slaveowners can really safeguard the proletarian and peasant revolution. The course of events and the development of the class struggle in the revolution has resulted in the slogan "All power to the Constituent Assembly"—which ignores the gains of the workers' and peasants' revolution, which ignores the Soviet power, which ignores the decisions of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, of the Second All-Russian Congress of Peasants' Depu-

ties, etc.—becoming in fact the slogan of the Cadets and the Kale-dinites, and of their abettors. It is becoming clear to the entire people that this slogan means in fact a struggle for the overthrow of the Soviet power, and that the Constituent Assembly, if it disagreed with the Soviet power, would inevitably be doomed to political extinction.

15) Among the particularly acute problems of national life is the problem of peace. A real revolutionary struggle for peace was commenced in Russia only after the victory of the revolution of November 7 (October 25), and the first fruits of this victory were the publication of the secret treaties, the conclusion of an armistice, and the beginning of open negotiations for a general peace without annexations and indemnities.

Only now have the broad masses of the people an opportunity of seeing in operation a policy of revolutionary struggle for peace, and of studying its results.

At the time of the elections to the Constituent Assembly the masses of the people had no such opportunity.

Clearly, then, from this point of view also, a discrepancy between the composition of the Constituent Assembly and the real will of the people on the question of terminating the war is also inevitable.

16) The result of all the above-mentioned circumstances is that the Constituent Assembly, elected according to party lists compiled before the proletarian and peasant revolution, under the rule of the bourgeoisie, must inevitably clash with the will and interests of the toiling and exploited classes which on November 7 (October 25) began the socialist revolution against the bourgeoisie. Naturally, the interests of this revolution are higher than the formal rights of the Constituent Assembly, even if those formal rights were not undermined by the absence in the Constituent Assembly Law of a provision recognising the right of the people to recall its deputies and hold new elections at any moment.

17) Every attempt, direct or indirect, to regard the question of the Constituent Assembly from a formal and legal point of view, within the limits of ordinary bourgeois democracy, and ignoring the class struggle and civil war, is treachery to the cause

of the proletariat, and is the adoption of the bourgeois point of view. It is the bounden duty of the revolutionary Social-Democrats to warn all and sundry against this error, into which a few Bolshevik leaders, who have not been able to appreciate the significance of the October uprising and the tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat, have fallen.

18) The only chance of securing a painless solution of the crisis which has arisen as a result of the discrepancy between the elections to the Constituent Assembly and the will of the people, as well as the interests of the toiling and exploited classes, is to enable the people as early as possible to exercise the right to elect anew the members of the Constituent Assembly, and for the Constituent Assembly to associate itself with the law passed by the Central Executive Committee concerning this new election, for the Constituent Assembly to proclaim unreservedly that it recognises the Soviet power, the Soviet revolution, its policy on the questions of peace, the land, and workers' control, and that it resolutely joins the camp of the enemies of the Cadet-Kaledinite counter-revolution.

19) Unless these conditions are created, the crisis in connection with the Constituent Assembly can be settled only in a revolutionary way, by the most energetic, rapid, firm and determined revolutionary measures on the part of the Soviet power against the Cadet-Kaledinite counter-revolution, no matter what slogans and institutions (even membership of the Constituent Assembly) this counter-revolution may screen itself with. Every attempt to tie the hands of the Soviet power in this struggle would be tantamount to aiding and abetting the counter-revolution.

December 24 (11) or 25 (12), 1917

DRAFT DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE TOILING AND EXPLOITED PEOPLE

THE Constituent Assembly resolves:

I

1) Russia is hereby declared a republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. All power centrally and locally belongs to the Soviets.

2) The Russian Soviet Republic shall be constituted on the principle of a free union of free nations, as a federation of Soviet national republics.

II

Making it its fundamental aim to abolish all forms of exploitation of man by man, to put a complete end to the division of society into classes, mercilessly to crush the resistance of the exploiters, to establish a socialist organisation of society and to achieve the victory of socialism in all countries, the Constituent Assembly further resolves:

1) Private property in land is hereby abolished. All land, together with all structures, farm property, and other appurtenances of agricultural production, is declared to be the property of the toiling people.

2) The Soviet laws on workers' control and on the Supreme Council of National Economy are hereby confirmed with the object of guaranteeing the power of the toiling people over the exploiters, and as a first step towards the complete transformation of the factories, workshops, mines, railways, and other means of production and transport into the property of the workers' and peasants' state.

3) The passing of all the banks into the possession of the workers' and peasants' state is hereby confirmed as one of the conditions for the emancipation of the toiling masses from the yoke of capitalism.

4) Universal labour service is hereby instituted with the object of abolishing the parasitic sections of society.

5) In order to guarantee sovereign power for the toiling masses, and in order to remove all possibility of the restoration of the power of the exploiters, the arming of the toilers, the creation of a socialist Red Army of workers and peasants and the complete disarming of the propertied classes are hereby decreed.

III

1) Expressing its firm determination to wrest mankind from the clutch of finance capital and imperialism, which have in this most criminal of wars drenched the world in blood, the Constituent Assembly declares its complete adherence to the policy of the Soviet power of tearing up the secret treaties, organising widespread fraternisation between the workers and peasants of the warring armies, and achieving at all costs and by revolutionary means a democratic peace among the nations, without annexations and indemnities, and on the basis of the self-determination of nations.

2) With the same purpose in view, the Constituent Assembly insists on a complete break with the barbarous policy of bourgeois civilisation, which has built the well-being of the exploiters of a few chosen nations on the enslavement of hundreds of millions of toiling people in Asia, in the colonies in general, and in the small countries.

The Constituent Assembly welcomes the policy of the Council of People's Commissars, which has proclaimed the complete independence of Finland, commenced the evacuation of troops from Persia and declared freedom of self-determination for Armenia.

3) The Constituent Assembly regards the Soviet law on the cancellation of the loans issued by the governments of the tsar, landlords and bourgeoisie as a first blow to international bank and finance capital, and expresses its conviction that the Soviet

government will firmly pursue this path until the international workers' revolt against the yoke of capital has completely triumphed.

IV

Having been elected on the basis of party lists drawn up prior to the October Revolution, when the people were still not in a position to rise *en masse* against the exploiters, when they still did not realise the full strength of the resistance shown by the latter in defence of their class privileges, and when they had not yet addressed themselves to the practical task of building a socialist society, the Constituent Assembly considers that it would be fundamentally wrong, even from a formal point of view, to set itself up against the Soviet power.

In point of fact, the Constituent Assembly considers that now, when the people are fighting the last fight against the exploiters, there can be no place for exploiters in any of the organs of government. The power must be vested solely and entirely in the toiling masses and their authorised government—the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

Supporting the Soviet power and the decrees of the Council of People's Commissars, the Constituent Assembly considers that its own duty must be limited to establishing a fundamental basis for the socialist reconstruction of society.

At the same time, with the object of creating a really free and voluntary, and therefore firm and stable, union of the toiling classes of all the nations of Russia, the Constituent Assembly limits its own duty to the establishment of the fundamental principles of a Federation of Soviet Republics of Russia, while leaving it to the workers and peasants of each nation to decide independently at their own sovereign Soviet Congress whether they shall participate in the federal government and in the other federal Soviet institutions, and on what terms.

Early part of January 1918

THE DISSOLUTION OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

*Speech Delivered to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee,
January 19 (6), 1918*

COMRADES, the collision that has occurred between the Soviet power and the Constituent Assembly arose out of the whole course of the Russian revolution, which was confronted by the unprecedented task of reconstructing society on socialist lines. After the events of 1905 there could be no doubt that tsarism was at its last gasp. Only the backwardness and benightedness of the peasants saved it from the abyss. The Revolution of 1917 was marked on the one hand by the fact that the bourgeois imperialist party transformed itself under the pressure of events into a republican party. On the other hand, there sprang up democratic organisations, the Soviets, such as were formed in 1905, for even at that time the Socialists realised that the organisation of these Soviets was creating something great, something new and unprecedented in the history of world revolution. The Soviets, created solely by the initiative of the people, are a form of democracy without parallel in any other country of the world.

The revolution evolved two forces: the union of the masses for the purpose of overthrowing tsarism, and the organisations of the toiling people. When I hear the enemies of the October Revolution exclaim that the ideas of socialism are unfeasible and utopian, I usually put to them a plain and simple question: What in their opinion, I ask, are the Soviets? What gave rise to these organisations of the people, which have no precedent in the history of the development of world revolution? Not one of them has been able to give a precise answer to this question. Defending the bourgeois system by inertia, they oppose these powerful organisations, the

having suffered torture, executions and wholesale shootings. It is vain for the hangmen to assert that the Bolsheviki, or certain "dictators," are responsible for the revolt of the toilers. That is being proved by the schism that is taking place in the depths of the masses at congresses, meetings, conferences, and so forth. The assimilation of the October Revolution by the people is not yet complete. This revolution has shown in practice how the people must proceed to transfer the land, the natural resources, the means of transport and production, to the workers' and peasants' state. Our cry was, All power to the Soviets; it is for this we are fighting. The people wanted the Constituent Assembly summoned, and we summoned it. But they sensed immediately what this famous Constituent Assembly really represented. And now we have carried out the will of the people, which is, All power to the Soviets. We shall break the backs of the saboteurs. When I came from the Smolny, that fount of life and vigour, to the Taurida Palace, I felt as though I were in the company of corpses and lifeless mummies. They drew on all their available resources in order to fight socialism, they resorted to violence and sabotage, they even turned knowledge—the great pride of humanity—into a means of exploiting the toiling people. But although they thereby somewhat hindered the march towards the socialist revolution, they were not and never will be able to stop it. For the power of the Soviets is too mighty; they have begun ruthlessly to smash the old, outworn foundations of the bourgeois system, not with gloved hands, but in a blunt proletarian and peasant fashion.

To hand over power to the Constituent Assembly would again be compromising with the malignant bourgeoisie. The Russian Soviets place the interests of the toiling masses far above the interests of treacherous compromise disguised in a new garb. A musty spirit of antiquity breathed in the speeches of those superannuated politicians, Chernov and Tseretelli, who continued tediously to whine for the cessation of civil war. But as long as Kaledin exists, and as long as behind the slogan "All power to the Constituent Assembly" is concealed the slogan "Down with the Soviets," civil war is inevitable. For nothing in the world

will induce us to surrender the Soviet power! . . . And when the Constituent Assembly again revealed its readiness to postpone all the painfully urgent problems and tasks that were placed before it by the Soviets, we told the Constituent Assembly that they must not be postponed for one single moment. And by the will of the Soviet power the Constituent Assembly, which has refused to recognise the power of the people, is being dissolved. The Ryabushinskys have lost their stakes; their attempts at resistance will only accentuate and provoke a new outbreak of civil war.

The Constituent Assembly is dissolved. The Soviet revolutionary republic will triumph, no matter what the cost. . . .

January 19 (6), 1918

DRAFT DECREE ON THE DISSOLUTION OF THE CON- STITUENT ASSEMBLY

At its very inception the Russian revolution created Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, as the mass organisation of the toiling and exploited classes and as the only organisation capable of leading the struggle of these classes for their complete political and economic emancipation.

During the whole of the first period of the Russian revolution the Soviets multiplied, grew and gained in strength. Experience taught them to discard illusions of compromise with the bourgeoisie and the deceptive forms of bourgeois-democratic parliamentarism, and brought them to the practical conclusion that the emancipation of the oppressed classes was impossible unless they abandoned these parliamentary forms and every form of compromise. Such was the October Revolution, which transferred the entire power to the Soviets.

The Constituent Assembly, elected on the basis of lists drawn up prior to the October Revolution, was an expression of the old relation of political forces, which existed when the compromisers and the Cadets were in power. When the people at that time voted for the candidates of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party they were not in a position to choose between the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, the supporters of the bourgeoisie, and the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, the supporters of socialism. Hence the Constituent Assembly, which was to have been the crown of the bourgeois parliamentary republic, could not but become an obstacle in the path of the October Revolution and the Soviet power.

The October Revolution, by handing power over to the Soviets and, through the Soviets, to the toiling and exploited classes,

aroused the desperate resistance of the exploiters. In the process of crushing this resistance the revolution proved itself to be the beginning of the socialist revolution. The toiling classes learned by experience that the old bourgeois parliamentarism had outlived itself and was entirely incompatible with the task of achieving socialism. They learned that not national institutions, but only class institutions (such as the Soviets are), were capable of breaking the resistance of the possessing classes and of laying the foundations of a socialist society. To relinquish at this stage any particle of the power of the Soviets, the Soviet republic won by the people, for the sake of bourgeois parliamentarism and the Constituent Assembly, would be a step backward and would mean the complete collapse of the October workers' and peasants' revolution.

Owing to the circumstances mentioned above, the majority in the Constituent Assembly, when it met on January 18 (5), was found to belong to the party of the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, the party of Kerensky, Avksentyev and Chernov. It was only natural that this party should refuse to discuss the absolutely clear, precise and unambiguous proposal of the supreme organ of the Soviet power, the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, to approve the programme of the Soviet power, to approve the Declaration of the Rights of the Toiling and Exploited People¹ and to recognise the October Revolution and the Soviet power. Thereby the Constituent Assembly severed all ties with the Soviet republic of Russia. The withdrawal from this Constituent Assembly of the fractions of the Bolsheviks and the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, who now patently represent the overwhelming majority in the Soviets and enjoy the confidence of the workers and the majority of the peasants, became inevitable.

The Right Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties are in fact carrying on outside the walls of the Constituent Assembly a most bitter struggle against the Soviet power, openly calling in their press for its overthrow and characterising as arbitrary and unlawful the crushing of the resistance of the exploiters by the

¹ See pp. 452-54 in this volume.—*Ed.*

toiling classes, which is essential in the interests of emancipation from exploitation. They are supporting the saboteurs, the servitors of capital, and are even going to the length of undisguised appeals for terrorism, which indeed certain "unidentified groups" have already begun to practise. It is obvious that under such circumstances the remaining part of the Constituent Assembly would only have served as a screen for the struggle of the counter-revolutionaries to overthrow the Soviet power.

Accordingly, the Central Executive Committee resolves:

The Constituent Assembly is hereby dissolved.

January 19 (6), 1918

THE ELECTIONS TO THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

In the volume of articles entitled *A Year of the Russian Revolution, 1917-18* (Moscow, 1918, Moscow Publishing House *Zemlya i Volya*), published by the Socialist-Revolutionaries, there is an extremely interesting article by N. V. Svyatitsky entitled "The Results of the Elections to the All-Russian Constituent Assembly (Introduction)." The author gives figures for 54 of the electoral districts out of a total of 79.

The author's investigations embrace practically every gubernia of European Russia and Siberia. The following were omitted: Olonets, Esthonia, Kaluga, Bessarabia, Podolsk, Orenburg, Yakutsk and the Don.

We shall first quote the general results cited by N. V. Svyatitsky and then proceed to discuss the political conclusions that follow from them.

I

In November 1917, in 54 districts, 36,262,560 votes were cast in all. The author himself gives the figure 36,257,960, distributed over seven regions (together with the army and navy), but an addition of the figures he quotes for the individual parties gives the total I have indicated.

The results for the individual parties were as follows: the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries received 16,500,000 votes, or, together with the Socialist-Revolutionaries of the other nationalities (Ukrainian, Mussulman, etc.), 20,900,000, or 58 per cent.

The Mensheviks obtained 668,064 votes, and if we add the analogous groups of Narodni-Socialists (312,000), the *Yedinstvo* (25,000), the Co-operators (51,000), the Ukrainian Social-Democrats (95,000), the Ukrainian Socialists (507,000), the German

Socialists (44,000) and the Finnish Socialists (14,000), we arrive at a total of 1,700,000.

The Bolsheviks obtained 9,023,963 votes.

The Cadets received 1,856,639 votes. If we add the Alliance of Landowners (215,000), the "Right Groups" (292,000), the Old Believers (73,000), the nationalist groups: Jews (550,000), Mus-sulmans (576,000), Bashkirs (195,000), Letts (67,000), Poles (155,000), Cossacks (79,000), Germans (130,000), White Rus-sians (12,000)—and miscellaneous groups and organisations (418,000), we obtain a total for the landlord and bourgeois parties of 4,600,000.

We know that during the whole period of the revolution, from February to October 1917, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks formed a *bloc*. Moreover, the whole course of events during this period, and since, has definitely shown that these two parties together represent the petty-bourgeois democrats, who false-ly imagine themselves to be and call themselves, just as do all the parties of the Second International, Socialists.

By adding together the three main groups of parties which participated in the elections to the Constituent Assembly, we ob-tain the following result:

Proletarian party (Bolsheviks)	9,020,000	25%
Petty-bourgeois democratic parties (Socialist-Revolu- tionaries, Mensheviks, etc.)	22,620,000	62%
Landlord and bourgeois parties (Cadets, etc.)	4,620,000	13%
Total	36,260,000	100%

Let us now cite the figures for the various regions,¹ as given by N. V. Svyatitsky:

¹ The author's division of Russia into regions is not quite the usual one: *Northern*: Archangel, Vologda, Petrograd, Novgorod, Pskov, Livonia; *Central Industrial*: Vladimir, Kostroma, Moscow, Nizhni-Novgorod, Ryazan, Tula, Tver, Yaroslavl; *Volga and Black-Earth*: Astrakhan, Voronezh, Kursk, Orel, Penza, Samara, Saratov, Simbirsk, Tambov; *Western*: Vitebsk, Minsk, Mo-ghilev, Smolensk; *Upper Urals*: Vyatka, Kazan, Perm, Ufa; *Siberia*: Tobolsk, Tomsk, Altai, Yenissei, Irkutsk, Trans-Baikal, Amur; *Ukraine*: Volynia, Eka-terinoslav, Kiev, Poltava, Taurida, Kharkov, Kherson, Chernigov.

Region	S.R.'s (Russian)	VOTES POLLED					Total
		Per cent	Bolsheviks	Per cent	Cadets	Per cent	
Northern	1,140,000	38	1,177,200	40	393,000	13	2,975,100
Central Industrial Volga and Black- Earth	1,987,900	38	2,305,600	44	550,200	10	5,242,500
Western	4,733,900	70	1,115,600	16	267,000	4	6,764,300
Eastern Urals ...	1,242,100	43	1,282,200	44	48,100	2	2,961,000
Siberia	1,547,700	43 (62 ¹)	443,900	12	181,300	5	3,583,500
Ukraine	2,094,800	75	273,900	10	87,500	3	2,786,700
Army and Navy .	1,878,100	25 (77 ²)	754,000	10	277,500	4	7,581,300
	1,885,100	43	1,671,300	38	51,900	1	4,363,600

From these figures it will be seen that at the time of the elections to the Constituent Assembly the Bolsheviks were the party of the proletariat, while the Socialist-Revolutionaries were the party of the peasantry. In the purely peasant regions of Great Russia (Volga and Black-Earth, Siberia, and the Eastern Urals) and in the Ukraine the Socialist-Revolutionaries obtained from 62 to 77 per cent of the votes. In the industrial regions the Bolsheviks enjoyed superiority over the Socialist-Revolutionaries. This superiority is minimised in the regional figures given by N. V. Svyatitsky, since he has lumped together highly industrial districts with districts that are but slightly industrial or not at all. For instance, the figures given by Svyatitsky according to gubernias, showing the strength of the Socialist-Revolutionary, Bolshevik and Cadet parties and of the national and other groups, reveal the following.

In the Northern Region the superiority of the Bolsheviks appears to be negligible—40 per cent as against 38 per cent. But this region embraces both non-industrial districts (the gubernias of Archangel, Vologda, Novgorod and Pskov) where the Socialist-Revolutionaries predominated, and industrial districts: Petrograd proper—Bolsheviks 45 per cent (according to number of votes polled), Socialist-Revolutionaries 16 per cent; Petrograd Gubernia—Bolsheviks 50 per cent, Socialist-Revolutionaries 26 per cent; Livonia—Bolsheviks 72 per cent, Socialist-Revolutionaries 0 per cent.

¹ The figure 62 per cent is arrived at by Svyatitsky by adding the Mussulman and Chuvash Socialist-Revolutionaries.

² I obtain the figure 77 per cent by adding the Ukrainian Socialist-Revolutionaries.

In the gubernias of the Central Industrial Region the results were: Moscow Gubernia—Bolsheviks 56 per cent, Socialist-Revolutionaries 25 per cent; the Moscow capital district—Bolsheviks 50 per cent, Socialist-Revolutionaries 8 per cent; Tver Gubernia—Bolsheviks 54 per cent, Socialist-Revolutionaries 39 per cent; Vladimir—Bolsheviks 56 per cent, Socialist-Revolutionaries 32 per cent.

How ridiculous, be it noted in passing, in the face of such facts, is the assertion that the Bolsheviks were supported and are still supported by a "minority" of the proletariat! And such assertions we hear from both the Mensheviks (668,000 votes, and with Transcaucasia another 700,000-800,000 votes, as against 9,000,000 votes cast for the Bolsheviks) and from the social-traitors of the Second International.

II

How then could such a miracle as the victory of the Bolsheviks have occurred, when the Bolsheviks received only one-quarter of the votes, while the petty-bourgeois democrats, in coalition with the bourgeoisie, obtained three-quarters of the votes? For it would be simply ridiculous to deny the victory now, when the Entente—the almighty Entente—has for two years been lending aid to every enemy of the Bolsheviks.

The fact is that the savage political hatred of the vanquished, all the followers of the Second International included, prevents them even from seriously considering so interesting a historical and political problem as the reasons for the victory of the Bolsheviks. The fact is that the "miracle" is a miracle only from the point of view of the vulgar petty-bourgeois democracy, the full profundity of whose ignorance and prejudice is exposed by this question and the answer to it.

From the point of view of the class struggle and of socialism, which the Second International has abandoned, the answer to the question is indisputable.

The Bolsheviks triumphed primarily because they had the support of the overwhelming majority of the proletariat, among them the most class conscious, energetic and revolutionary section, the true vanguard of this advanced class.

Let us take the two capitals, Petrograd and Moscow. In these two cities a total of 1,765,100 votes were cast in the elections to

the Constituent Assembly, of which the Socialist-Revolutionaries polled 218,000, the Bolsheviks 837,000, and the Cadets 515,400.

Notwithstanding the ardent genuflections of the petty-bourgeois democrats who call themselves Socialists and Social-Democrats (the Chernovs, Martovs, Kautskys, Longuets, MacDonalds and Co.) before the altar of the goddesses of "equality," "universal suffrage," "democracy," "pure democracy" and "consistent democracy," the economic and political fact of the *inequality* of town and country cannot be effaced.

It is a fact inevitable under capitalism in general, and in the transition from capitalism to communism in particular.

Under the conditions of the present historical era, the town cannot be the equal of the country and the country cannot be the equal of the town. The town will inevitably *lead* the country. The country will inevitably *follow the town*. The only question is, *which class* of the "town classes" will succeed in leading the country, will achieve this aim, and what forms this *leadership of the town* will take.

In November 1917 the Bolsheviks had the vast majority of the proletariat behind them. The party that competed with them for the support of the proletariat, the Menshevik Party, was utterly beaten (9,000,000 votes as against 1,400,000, if we add to the 668,000 the 700,000-800,000 votes of Transcaucasia). It was beaten in a struggle that had lasted fifteen years (from 1903 to 1917), that had *tempered*, enlightened and organised the vanguard of the proletariat, and *forged* it into a genuine revolutionary vanguard. The first revolution, 1905, paved the way for further development; it determined *in practice* the relation between the two parties and was a dress rehearsal for the great events of 1917-19.

The petty-bourgeois democrats who call themselves the "Socialists" of the Second International prefer to evade serious historical questions by uttering honeyed phrases on the advantages of the "unity" of the proletariat. These honeyed phrases help them to forget the historical fact that *opportunism had been accumulating* within the working class movement in the period 1871-1914. They forget or do not want to think of the causes of the collapse of opportunism in August 1914 and of the split in international Socialism during the years 1914-17.

Unless the *revolutionary* section of the proletariat is thoroughly and seriously trained to eject and suppress opportunism, it is absurd even to think of a dictatorship of the proletariat. This lesson of the Russian revolution must be rubbed into the leaders of the German "Independent" Social-Democratic Party, the French Socialists, and so forth, who would now like to wriggle out of the situation by paying lip service to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Furthermore, the Bolsheviks had behind them not only the majority of the proletariat, and not only the *revolutionary* vanguard of the proletariat, which had been tempered in a long and stubborn struggle against opportunism. They had, if one may use a military term, the advantage of powerful "striking forces" in the capitals.

To have an overwhelming superiority of forces at the decisive moment and at the decisive point is a "law" not only of military success, but also of political success, especially in that bitter, seething war of the classes known as revolution.

The capitals, and the large commercial and industrial centres generally (in Russia these conceptions were coincident, but that is not always the case), to a considerable extent decide the political fate of a people—provided, of course, the centres are adequately supported by the rural forces in the localities, even if that support may not be immediately forthcoming.

In both capitals, in both of the most important commercial and industrial centres of Russia, the Bolsheviks possessed an overwhelming and decisive superiority of forces. Here we had *almost four times* as many votes as the Socialist-Revolutionaries. We had *more than the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Cadets put together*. Furthermore, our opponents were disintegrated, for the "coalition" of the Cadets with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks (in Petrograd and Moscow the Mensheviks polled only 3 per cent of the votes) had been utterly discredited in the eyes of the toiling masses. There could be no question at that time of any *real unity* of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks with the Cadets against us.¹ As we know, even the leaders of the Socialist-Revolu-

¹ It is interesting to note the unity of the party of the proletariat, revealed by the facts quoted above, compared with the extreme disunity of the parties of the petty bourgeoisie and the party of the bourgeoisie.

tionaries and the Mensheviks, who were a hundred times closer to the idea of a *bloc* with the Cadets than the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik workers and peasants, even those leaders were thinking of (and bargained with us for) a coalition with the Bolsheviks without the Cadets.

We fought for the capitals in October and November 1917 with certainty of success, because we had an overwhelming superiority of forces and were thoroughly prepared politically (both as regards the concentration, training, testing, and tempering of the Bolshevik "armies," and as regards the disintegration, disablement, disruption and demoralisation of the "armies" of the "enemy").

And thus, having the possibility, by a sudden and decisive blow, of seizing both the capitals, both the economic and political centres of the whole capitalist state machine, despite the savage resistance of the bureaucrats and the "intelligentsia," despite sabotage and so forth, and with the aid of the central apparatus of state power, we were in a position *to prove in practice* to the non-proletarian toiling masses that the proletariat is their sole reliable ally, their sole friend and leader.

III

But before passing to this, the most important question of the relation of the proletariat to the non-proletarian toiling masses, we must first dwell on the question of the army.

In the imperialist war the army absorbed the very flower of the national forces. And while the opportunist scum of the Second International (not only the social-chauvinists, *i.e.*, the Scheidemanns and Renaudels, who became direct advocates of "national defence," but also the "Centrists") by their words and deeds helped to strengthen the subordination of the army to the leadership of the imperialist brigands of both the German and the Anglo-French groups, the genuine proletarian revolutionaries never forgot the words uttered by Marx in 1870: "The bourgeoisie will teach the proletariat the use of arms." Only traitors to socialism, both the Austro-German and the Anglo-Franco-Russian, could advocate "national defence" in the imperialist war, *i.e.*, a predatory war on both sides; but the proletarian revolutionaries from the very beginning (August 1914) devoted all their attention to revolution-

ising the army, to using it against the imperialist bourgeois bandits, to transforming an unjust and predatory war between two groups of imperialist plunderers into a just and legitimate war of the proletarians and oppressed toiling masses in every country against their "own" national bourgeoisie.

The traitors to socialism *did nothing* during the years 1914-17 to prepare to use the armies against the imperialist governments of every nation.

The Bolsheviks from August 1914 on worked for this end in all their propaganda, agitation and illegal organisational work. Of course, the traitors to socialism, the Scheidemanns and Kautskys of all nations, on this account ranted about the "demoralisation" of the army by Bolshevik propaganda; but we *are proud* of having fulfilled our duty in demoralising the forces of our class enemy and in *winning away from him* the armed masses of the workers and peasants *for the struggle* against the exploiters.

The results of our work were evident also in the elections to the Constituent Assembly in November 1917, in which the army in Russia also voted.

Here are the main results of the voting, as given by N. V. Svyatitsky:

NUMBER OF VOTES CAST IN THE ELECTIONS TO THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY
IN NOVEMBER 1917 BY THE ARMY AND NAVY

	<i>S.R.'s</i>	<i>Bolsheviks</i>	<i>Cadets</i>	<i>National and Other Groups</i>	<i>Total</i>
Northern Front	240,000	480,000	?	60,000 ²	780,000
Western Front	180,600	635,400	16,700	125,200	976,000
South-Western Front	402,900	300,100	13,700	290,600	1,007,400
Rumanian Front	679,400	167,000	21,400	260,700	1,128,600
Caucasian Front	360,000	60,000	?	—	420,000
Baltic Fleet	—	(120,000 ¹)	—	—	(120,000 ¹)
Black Sea Fleet	22,200	10,800	—	19,500	52,500
Total	1,885,100	1,671,300	51,800	756,000	4,364,500
		(120,000 ¹)	+?		+ (120,000 ¹)
		1,791,300			4,484,500

¹ The figures are approximate: two Bolsheviks were elected. N. V. Svyatitsky reckons 60,000 votes for each representative. That is why I take 120,000.

² It is not stated which of the parties received the 19,500 votes of the Black Sea Fleet. The remaining figures in this column apparently refer almost entirely to the Ukrainian Socialists, since ten Ukrainian Socialists and one Social-Democrat (i.e., Menshevik) were elected.

The totals are: Socialist-Revolutionaries 1,885,100 votes, Bolsheviks 1,671,300 votes. If to the latter be added the 120,000 (approximate) votes of the Baltic Fleet, we obtain for the Bolsheviks a total of 1,791,300 votes.

Hence the Bolsheviks received *only slightly less* than the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

In October and November 1917, therefore, the army was already *one-half Bolshevik*.

And but for that we could not have triumphed.

And while we had half the votes in the army in general, we enjoyed an overwhelming superiority on the fronts which were *nearest to the capitals*, or not too far distant from the capitals. If the Caucasian front be excluded, the Bolsheviks enjoyed a general superiority over the Socialist-Revolutionaries, while on the Northern and Western fronts the Bolsheviks polled more than 1,000,000 votes, as against 420,000 votes polled by the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

Hence, in the army too the Bolsheviks in November 1917 already possessed the political "striking force" which guaranteed them an overwhelming superiority of forces at the decisive point at the decisive moment. Since the Bolsheviks had the overwhelming superiority on the Northern and Western fronts, while on the other fronts, more remote from the centre, the Bolsheviks had both the time and the opportunity *to win the peasants away from the Socialist-Revolutionary Party* (of which we shall speak later), the possibility of the army's opposing the October Revolution of the proletariat and the seizure of political power by the proletariat was out of the question.

IV

On the basis of the data of the elections to the Constituent Assembly, we have analysed three of the conditions which made for the triumph of Bolshevism: 1) an overwhelming majority of the proletariat; 2) nearly half the votes in the army; 3) an overwhelming superiority of forces at the decisive moment at the decisive points, namely, in the capitals and in the armies at the fronts nearest to the capitals.

But these conditions would have resulted only in the most shortlived and uncertain of victories had the Bolsheviks not suc-

ceeded in winning over the majority of the *non-proletarian* toiling masses, and wresting them away from the Socialist-Revolutionary and other petty-bourgeois parties.

That is the essential point.

And the chief reason why the "Socialists" (read *petty-bourgeois democrats*) of the Second International cannot understand the dictatorship of the proletariat is that they fail to realise that *the power of the state in the hands of one class, the proletariat, can become and should become an instrument for winning over the non-proletarian toiling masses to the side of the proletariat, an instrument for wresting these masses away from the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois parties.*

Imbued as they are with petty-bourgeois prejudices, and forgetting what is most essential in the teachings of Marx on the state, the "Socialists" of the Second International regard the power of the state as something sacrosanct, an idol, the resultant of formal voting, the absolute of "consistent democracy" (and similar nonsense). They do not see that the power of the state is simply an instrument which different classes can use, and must use (and know how to use) *in their own class interests.*

The bourgeoisie used the power of the state as an instrument of the capitalist class against the proletariat and against all the toilers. This was the case even in the most democratic bourgeois republics. But the traitors to Marxism "forgot" this fact.

The proletariat (having assembled sufficiently powerful political and military "striking forces") must overthrow the bourgeoisie and deprive it of the power of the state, so as to wield this *instrument* for its *own* class purposes.

And what are the class purposes of the proletariat?

To crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie.

To "neutralise" the peasantry and, as far as possible, to win them—or at least the majority of the toiling, non-exploiting section of the peasantry—over to the side of the proletariat.

To organise large-scale machine production with the factories and means of production expropriated from the bourgeoisie in general.

To build up socialism on the ruins of capitalism.

The opportunists, including the Kautskians, are "teaching" the people a mockery of the teachings of Marx: the proletariat, forsooth, must first gain a majority with the help of universal suffrage; then, having gained this majority, it must take over the power of the state; and, finally, on the basis of this "consistent" (or "pure," as it is called now) democracy, it must proceed to organise socialism.

We, on the other hand, declare, on the basis of the teachings of Marx and the experience of the Russian revolution, that the proletariat must first overthrow the bourgeoisie and conquer the power of the state, and then use the power of the state, *i.e.*, the dictatorship of the proletariat, as an instrument of its class in order to gain the sympathy of the majority of the toilers.

* * *

In what way can the power of the state in the hands of the proletariat become an instrument in the class struggle of the latter to establish its influence over the non-proletarian toiling masses, to win them over to the side of the proletariat, and to wrest them away from the bourgeoisie?

In the first place, the proletariat can achieve this aim not by restarting the old machinery of state power, but *by smashing it to atoms* and not leaving a stone of it standing (heedless of the howls of the panic-stricken respectable citizens and of the threats of the saboteurs). It must then create a new state apparatus, an apparatus which is adapted for the dictatorship of the proletariat and for the struggle of the latter against the bourgeoisie for the support of the non-proletarian toiling masses. This new apparatus is not somebody's invention, but *grows out of* the class struggle of the proletariat, as that struggle grows in width and depth. This new apparatus of state power, this new *type* of state power, is the *Soviet power*.

The Russian proletariat, immediately it conquered the state power, in the course of a few hours dissolved the old state machine (which, as Marx pointed out, had in the process of centuries become adapted to serving the class interests of the bourgeoisie, even in the most democratic of republics) and handed over the *entire*

power to the Soviets. Only the toilers and exploited were admitted to the Soviets, while exploiters of every kind were excluded.

In this way the proletariat at once, at a single blow, immediately *after* it seizes the state power, can succeed in *wresting* from the bourgeoisie the *vast mass* of the latter's followers among the petty-bourgeois and the "Socialist" parties. For this mass consists of toilers and exploited, whom the bourgeoisie (including its toadies, the Chernovs, Kautskys, Martovs, and Co.) have deceived and who, *with the establishment of the Soviet power*, for the *first* time in their history secure a weapon in the mass struggle for the protection of their interests against the bourgeoisie.

In the second place, the proletariat can and must immediately, or at any rate very quickly, deprive the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois democrats of "*their*" masses, *i.e.*, of the masses who follow them, *by satisfying their most urgent economic needs in a revolutionary way, i.e., by expropriating the landlords and the bourgeoisie.*

This the bourgeoisie *cannot do*, no matter how "mighty" is the state power it possesses.

But this the proletariat *can do* immediately it seizes the power of the state, for it possesses both the machinery (the Soviets) and the economic means (expropriation of the landlords and the bourgeoisie) necessary for the purpose.

That is exactly how the Russian proletariat *won the peasantry away* from the Socialist-Revolutionaries, doing so literally *within a few hours* after it had seized the state power. For within a few hours after it had gained the victory over the bourgeoisie in Petrograd, the triumphant proletariat promulgated the Decree on the Land, by which it immediately, with revolutionary dispatch, energy and thoroughness, *satisfied* all the most urgent economic needs of the *majority* of the peasants and completely expropriated the landlords without compensation.

In order to prove to the peasants that it was the desire of the proletarians not to sergeant-major them, to order them about, but to assist them and be their friends, the victorious Bolsheviks introduced *not one word of their own* into the Decree on the Land, but copied it word for word from the peasant Instructions (of course

(the most revolutionary) that had been published by the Socialist-Revolutionaries in the Socialist-Revolutionary paper.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries were enraged, indignant, disgusted, and cried out that "the Bolsheviks had stolen their programme." But they were only laughed at for their pains. A fine party, indeed, that had to be defeated and driven out of power, in order that all that was revolutionary and advantageous to the toilers in its programme might be carried out!

The traitors, blockheads, and pedants of the Second International could never understand this dialectics—that the proletariat cannot triumph unless it wins a majority of the population over to its side, but that to confine the winning of a majority to, or make it conditional upon, obtaining a majority of votes at the polls *under the rule of the bourgeoisie* is either the densest stupidity, or a sheer attempt to fool the workers. In order to win the majority of the population, the proletariat must, in the first place, overthrow the bourgeoisie and seize the power of the state; secondly, it must set up a Soviet government and smash the old machinery of state to atoms, whereby it immediately undermines the rule, authority and influence of the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois compromisers over the non-proletarian toiling masses; and, thirdly, it must entirely destroy the influence of the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois compromisers over the *majority* of the non-proletarian toiling masses by satisfying their economic needs *in a revolutionary way at the expense of the exploiters*.

All this is possible, of course, only when a certain level of capitalist development has been reached. For without that fundamental condition the proletariat does not become formed into a separate class, nor does it successfully undergo prolonged preparation, education, training and testing in the struggle in the course of many years of strikes, demonstrations and pillorying and expulsion of opportunists. Without that fundamental condition, the centres cannot assume that economic and political importance which permits the proletariat, by seizing the centres, to seize the entire power of the state, or, more truly, its vital nerve, its core, its nodal point. Without that fundamental condition, there cannot be that kinship, that closeness and connection between the

position of the proletariat and the position of the non-proletarian toiling masses which is essential if the proletariat is successfully to exert its influence over those masses.

V

Let us proceed further.

The proletariat can win the power of the state, establish a Soviet system and satisfy the economic needs of the majority of the toilers at the expense of the exploiters.

Is that all that is required for a final and complete victory?
No.

It is an illusion of the petty-bourgeois democrats and of their chief representatives at the present day, the "Socialists" and the "Social-Democrats," to imagine that the toiling masses under capitalism can attain to such a degree of class consciousness, such strength of character, such penetration and breadth of political outlook, as to enable them to decide *by merely voting*, or generally *to decide in advance*, without long experience and struggle, which class or which party they shall follow.

That is an illusion. It is a sweet fable of the pedants and sugary Socialists of the type of Kautsky, Longuet and MacDonald.

Capitalism would not be capitalism if it did not on the one hand condemn *the masses* to a crushed, downtrodden, terrorised, disunited (the countryside!) and ignorant existence, and if on the other it (capitalism) did not place at the disposal of the bourgeoisie a gigantic apparatus for lying and deceit, for the wholesale fooling and stupefying of the workers and the peasants.

Only the proletariat, therefore, *can lead the toilers* from capitalism to communism. There is absolutely no possibility of the petty-bourgeois or semi-petty-bourgeois masses of the toilers deciding in advance the complex political question of whether they should side with the working class or with the bourgeoisie. *Vacillation* on the part of the non-proletarian toiling strata is inevitable. It inevitably requires their own *practical* experience to enable them to *compare* the leadership of the bourgeoisie with the leadership of the proletariat.

This circumstance the devotees of "consistent democracy" con-

stantly lose sight of. They imagine that serious political questions can be decided by voting. As a matter of fact, such questions, when they have been rendered crucial by the struggle, are decided by *civil war*; and in civil war the experience of the non-proletarian toiling masses (particularly the peasants) in comparing and contrasting proletarian government with bourgeois government is of tremendous importance.

In this respect the elections to the Constituent Assembly in Russia in November 1917, contrasted with the two years of civil war (1917-19), are extremely instructive.

Let us see what regions proved to be least Bolshevik. First, the Eastern Urals and Siberia, which gave the Bolsheviks 12 per cent and 10 per cent of the votes respectively, and, secondly, the Ukraine, which gave the Bolsheviks 10 per cent of the votes. Of the remaining regions, the lowest percentage of votes was given the Bolsheviks by the peasant region of Great Russia, the Volga and Black-Earth Region, but even here the Bolsheviks secured 16 per cent of the votes.

And it is in the regions where in November 1917 the lowest percentage of votes was cast for the Bolsheviks that the counter-revolutionary movement, the uprisings and organisation of forces of counter-revolution, were most successful. It was in these regions that Kolchak and Denikin maintained their power for many long months.

The vacillations of the petty-bourgeois population were very strikingly revealed in the regions where the influence of the proletariat was least felt.

At first they were for the Bolsheviks, when the latter gave them land and when the demobilised soldiers brought the news of peace. Then they went against the Bolsheviks, when the latter, in the interests of the international development of the revolution, and in order to preserve the hearth of revolution in Russia, accepted the Brest-Litovsk Peace, thereby "offending" one of the most profound of petty-bourgeois sentiments, patriotism. The dictatorship of the proletariat was not to the liking of the peasants in regions with large surpluses of grain, when the Bolsheviks showed that they would be stern and unbending in demanding that these sur-

pluses be surrendered to the state at fixed prices. The peasants of the Urals, Siberia and the Ukraine thereupon turned towards Kolchak and Denikin.

Next, the experience of the "democracy" of Kolchak and Denikin, so trumpeted by every journalist in every White Guard paper in Kolchakia and Denikinland, proved to the peasants that the talk about democracy and the Constituent Assembly was only a screen for the dictatorship of the landlords and capitalists.

A new swing-over to the Bolsheviks began: the peasant uprisings in the rear of Kolchak and Denikin multiplied. The Red troops were greeted by the peasants as liberators.

In the long run it was these vacillations of the peasants, who constitute the greater part of the petty-bourgeois toiling masses, that decided the fate of the Soviet power and of the power of Kolchak and Denikin. But the "long run" was preceded by a fairly long period of bitter struggle and painful experience, which even now, after the lapse of two years, has not ended in Russia, has not ended, that is, in Siberia and the Ukraine. And one cannot vouch that it will *finally* end within, say, another year or so.

The adherents of "consistent" democracy have never reflected on the significance of this historical fact. They believed, and still believe, in the fairy-tale that the proletariat under capitalism can "convince" the majority of the toilers and definitely win them over to its side by mere voting. But the facts show that only in the course of a long and bitter struggle, and only after comparing the dictatorship of the proletariat with the dictatorship of the capitalists, is the *vacillating* petty bourgeoisie led by its own painful experience to the conclusion that the former is preferable to the latter.

All Socialists who have studied Marxism and are desirous of profiting by the experience of the political history of the advanced countries during the nineteenth century theoretically admit the inevitability of the *vacillations* of the petty bourgeoisie between the proletariat and the capitalist class. The economic roots of these vacillations are clearly revealed by economic science, the truths of which have been repeated a million times in the news-

papers, leaflets and pamphlets of the Socialists of the Second International.

But people seem incapable of applying these truths to the specific epoch of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They replace the *class struggle* by petty-bourgeois democratic prejudices and illusions ("equality" of classes, "consistent" or "pure" democracy, the decision of great historical questions by means of the ballot, etc.). They refuse to understand that by seizing the power of the state the proletariat does not thereby put an end to its class struggle, but continues it in a different form and by different methods. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the class war of the proletariat fought with the weapon of the power of the state; it is a class war one of the aims of which is to demonstrate to the non-proletarian toiling strata by protracted experience and by a long series of practical examples that it is better for them to side with the dictatorship of the proletariat than to side with the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and that no third course exists.

The figures for the elections to the Constituent Assembly in November 1917 provide a background for the picture presented by the development of the civil war in the course of the subsequent two years. The basic forces in this war are already clearly discernible in the elections to the Constituent Assembly: we see the part played by the "striking force" of the proletarian army, the part played by the vacillating peasants, and the part played by the bourgeoisie.

In his article N. V. Svyatitsky writes:

"The Cadets achieved their greatest successes in the same regions as the Bolsheviks: the Northern and the Central Industrial Regions" (p. 116).

It is natural that the elements intermediary between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie were weakest in the most highly developed capitalist centres. It is natural that the class struggle was most acute in these centres. It was at these points that the main forces of the bourgeoisie were concentrated, and only at these points was the proletariat in a position to defeat the bourgeoisie. Only the proletariat could inflict a crushing defeat upon it. And only after having crushed it was the proletariat able, using so

effective an instrument as the state, to win the sympathy and support of the petty-bourgeois sections of the population.

If we know how to read and use them, the figures of the elections to the Constituent Assembly once more prove the fundamental truths of the Marxian doctrine of the class struggle.

Incidentally, these figures also demonstrate the role and significance of the national question. Take the Ukraine. At the recent conferences on the Ukrainian question certain comrades accused the writer of "attaching undue importance" to the national question in the Ukraine. The figures for the elections to the Constituent Assembly show that in the Ukraine in November 1917 the *Ukrainian* Socialist-Revolutionaries and Socialists received the majority (3,400,000 votes plus 500,000, or 3,900,000 votes, as against 1,900,000 votes cast for the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries, out of a total of 7,600,000 votes cast in the Ukraine). In the armies on the South-Western and Rumanian fronts the Ukrainian Socialists received 30 per cent and 34 per cent of the total vote respectively, as against 40 per cent and 59 per cent received by the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries.

Under such circumstances, to ignore the importance of the national question in the Ukraine—of which Great-Russians are frequently guilty (and perhaps Jews not much less frequently than Great-Russians)—is a profound and dangerous error. The separation of the Russian and the Ukrainian Socialist-Revolutionaries in the Ukraine in 1917 cannot have been a mere accident. It is our duty as internationalists, first, to conduct a particularly energetic campaign against the survivals (at times unconscious) of Great-Russian imperialism and chauvinism among the "Russian" Communists, and, secondly, to make concessions on this national question, since comparatively it is unimportant (for an internationalist the question of state boundaries is of second-rate, if not of tenth-rate, importance). Other questions are important, such as the fundamental interests of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the unity and discipline of the Red Army fighting against Denikin, the leadership of the proletariat in relation to the peasantry. Whether the Ukraine shall be a separate state or not is a question of far inferior importance. We should not be surprised—or

frightened—by the prospect of the workers and peasants of the Ukraine trying various systems, and in the course of several years, say, testing by practical experiment fusion with the R.S.F.S.R., secession from the R.S.F.S.R. and the formation of an independent Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, various forms of close alliance with the R.S.F.S.R., and so on, and so forth.

To attempt to settle this problem in advance, once and for all, “firmly” and “irrevocably,” would be narrow-mindedness, or sheer folly, for the vacillations of the non-proletarian toiling masses on *such* a question are entirely natural and even inevitable, and in no way alarming for the proletariat. A representative of the proletariat who is really an internationalist should exercise the greatest caution and tolerance towards such vacillations; he must leave it to the non-proletarian toiling elements *themselves* to overcome these vacillations by their own experience. But we must be stern and uncompromising, intolerant and merciless, in regard to other, more fundamental, questions, some of which I have already indicated above.

VI

A comparison of the elections to the Constituent Assembly in November 1917 with the development of the proletarian revolution in Russia from October 1917 to December 1919 enables us to draw conclusions that are applicable to bourgeois parliamentarism and the proletarian revolution in every capitalist country. Let us attempt to enumerate, or at least indicate, the most important of these conclusions.

1) Universal suffrage provides an index of the state of maturity of the various classes in the understanding of their class problems. It shows how the various classes are *inclined* to solve their problems. But the *solution* of the problems is effected not by means of the ballot, but by the class struggle in all its forms, including civil war.

2) The Socialists and Social-Democrats of the Second International profess the point of view of vulgar petty-bourgeois demo-

cracy, and share the prejudice that the ballot can solve the fundamental problems of the class struggle.

3) It is essential that the party of the revolutionary proletariat should participate in bourgeois parliamentarism for the purpose of educating the masses by means of elections and the struggle of parties within parliament. But to confine the class struggle to the parliamentary struggle, or to regard the latter as the supreme and decisive form of struggle, to which all other forms of struggle are subordinate, is in practice to desert the proletariat for the bourgeoisie.

4) In fact, all the representatives and supporters of the Second International, and all the leaders of the so-called German "Independent" Social-Democrats, are thus deserting to the side of the bourgeoisie, inasmuch as, while giving verbal recognition to the dictatorship of the proletariat, they in practice, in their propaganda, inculcate the idea into the proletariat that it must obtain a formal expression of the will of the majority of the population under capitalism (i.e., a majority of votes in the bourgeois parliament) before political power can pass into the hands of the proletariat.

The German "Independent" Social-Democrats and similar leaders of rotten Socialism, who, starting from this premise, howl against the "dictatorship of a minority," and so forth, simply reveal their lack of understanding of the fact that a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie dominates even the most democratic republics, and their lack of understanding of the conditions under which this dictatorship can be destroyed by the class struggle of the proletariat.

5) This lack of understanding, in particular, consists in the following: they forget that the bourgeois parties maintain their rule chiefly by deceiving the masses of the population and by the oppression exercised by capital, to which is added self-deception as to the nature of capitalism, a self-deception that is characteristic particularly of the petty-bourgeois parties, which as a rule are anxious to replace the class struggle by more or less concealed forms of class conciliation.

Let the majority of the population, while private property still exists, i.e., under the rule and yoke of capital, first express

themselves in favour of the party of the proletariat, and only then the latter can and should take power—so say the petty-bourgeois democrats, who call themselves “Socialists” but are in reality the servitors of the bourgeoisie.

We say: Let the revolutionary proletariat first overthrow the bourgeoisie, break the yoke of capital and smash the bourgeois state machine; then the victorious proletariat will rapidly be able to gain the sympathy and support of the majority of the toiling non-proletarian masses by satisfying their needs at the expense of the exploiters. The contrary would be a rare exception in history (ay, and in such an exception the bourgeoisie may resort to civil war, as was shown in the case of Finland).

6) Or, in other words:

We must first give an undertaking to observe the principles of equality, or of consistent democracy, leaving private property and the yoke of capital intact (*i.e.*, formal equality, but actual inequality), and must endeavour to secure a majority on that basis—so say the bourgeoisie and their chorus, the petty-bourgeois democrats, who call themselves Socialists and Social-Democrats.

We say: First the class war of the proletariat, by seizing the power of the state, must destroy the props and foundations of actual inequality, and then the proletariat, having defeated the exploiters, can lead the toiling masses to the *abolition of classes*, *i.e.*, to socialist *equality*, the only equality that is not a deception.

7) In every capitalist country, apart from the proletariat, or that section of the proletariat which realises its revolutionary aims and is capable of fighting for their realisation, there are numerically large proletarian strata of the toiling masses who do not realise that they are proletarians, who are half proletarian and half petty-bourgeois, who support the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois democrats (including the “Socialists” of the Second International) and are deceived by them; for they have no faith in their own strength or the strength of the proletariat, and do not realise that it is possible to secure the satisfaction of their essential needs by expropriating the exploiters.

These sections of toilers and exploited provide allies for the vanguard of the proletariat, and with them the proletariat forms

a solid majority of the population. But the proletariat can win over these allies only with the aid of such an instrument as the power of the state, *i.e.*, only after the bourgeoisie has been overthrown and its state machinery smashed.

8) In all capitalist countries the strength of the proletariat is incomparably greater than its numerical strength in proportion to the total population. This is due to the fact that the proletariat economically dominates the centre and nerve of the whole economic system of capitalism, and also because under capitalism the proletariat economically and politically expresses the true interests of the vast majority of the toilers.

For this reason the proletariat, even when it forms a minority of the population (or when the class conscious and truly revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat forms a minority of the population), is capable of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and of then gaining numerous allies from among the mass of semi-proletarians and petty bourgeois, who otherwise would never have expressed themselves in favour of the rule of the proletariat, and would never have understood the conditions and aims of the rule of the proletariat, and who only by their subsequent experience become convinced that the dictatorship of the proletariat is inevitable, proper and legitimate.

9) And, finally, in every capitalist country there are always vast numbers of the petty bourgeoisie, who inevitably vacillate between capital and labour. In order to achieve victory, the proletariat must first select the right moment for a decisive attack upon the bourgeoisie, taking into account, among other things, the divergence between the bourgeoisie and its petty-bourgeois allies, or the instability of their alliance, and so forth. Secondly, the proletariat, after its victory, must so take advantage of the vacillations of the petty bourgeoisie as to neutralise it and prevent it from going over to the side of the exploiters, and must be able to maintain itself for a definite period in spite of those vacillations, and so on, and so forth.

10) One of the essential conditions for preparing the proletariat for victory is a prolonged, persistent and ruthless struggle against opportunism, reformism, social-chauvinism, and simi-

lar bourgeois influences and tendencies, which are inevitable as long as the proletariat acts under capitalist conditions. Unless such a struggle is fought, and unless a complete victory over opportunism within the working class movement is preliminarily gained, there can be no hope for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Bolshevism would never have triumphed over the bourgeoisie in 1917-19 had it not previously learned, during the years 1903-17, to defeat and ruthlessly expel the Mensheviks, i.e., the opportunists, reformists and social-chauvinists, from the party of the proletarian vanguard.

The recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat by the leaders of the German "Independents," the French Longuetists, etc., in word, while in deed they continue their old habitual policy of making concessions and indulgences to opportunism, of compromising with opportunism, of slavishly worshipping the prejudices of bourgeois democracy ("consistent democracy" or "pure democracy," as they call it), of bourgeois parliamentarism, etc., is a dangerous form of self-deception—ay, and at times a deliberate fraud upon the workers.

December 29 (16), 1919

THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE REVOLUTION

*Speech Delivered at the Sixth Extraordinary Congress of Soviets,
November 6, 1918*

COMRADES, we are celebrating the anniversary of our revolution at a moment when events of the utmost importance are taking place in the international working class movement, and when it has become obvious to even the most sceptical and doubting elements of the working class and the toilers that the World War will end neither by agreements nor by violence on the part of the old government and the old ruling bourgeois class; that it is leading not only Russia but the whole world to a world proletarian revolution and to the triumph of the workers over capital, which has drenched the earth in blood; and that after the violence and outrages of German imperialism the same policy is being pursued by Anglo-French imperialism, supported by Austria and Germany.

Today, when celebrating the anniversary of the revolution, it is fitting that we cast a glance back along the path traversed by the revolution. We were obliged to begin our revolution under unusually difficult conditions, such as no other working class revolution in the world will ever have to face. It is therefore particularly important that we should endeavour to review the whole path we have traversed, to ascertain what we have achieved during this period, and to what extent we have prepared ourselves during the past year for the fulfilment of our chief, our true, our decisive and fundamental task. We must be one of the divisions, one of the units of the world proletarian and socialist army. We have always realised that if we were called upon to begin the revolution, which grew out of the world struggle, it was not on account of any merit of the Russian proletariat, or because it was in advance of the others. On the contrary, it was only because of the

particular weakness and backwardness of capitalism, and the particular pressure of military strategic circumstances, that we were obliged by the course of events to occupy a position in advance of the other divisions, and to wait until they also began to move and rose in revolt. We now undertake this review in order to ascertain to what extent we are prepared for the battles that will face us in our coming revolution.

And so, comrades, when we ask ourselves what we have done on a large scale during the past year, we must reply that the following has been done: from workers' control, the first measure taken by the working class, and from husbanding the resources of the country, we are directly confronted with the task of creating a workers' administration of industry; in place of the general struggle of the peasants for land, the struggle of the peasants against the landlords, a struggle that bore a national, bourgeois and democratic character, we have reached a stage when the proletarian and semi-proletarian elements in the countryside have become differentiated: those who toil and are exploited have become differentiated and have arisen to build a new life; the most oppressed section of the rural population has entered upon a life-and-death struggle against the bourgeoisie, including their own rural kulak bourgeoisie.

Furthermore, from the first steps of Soviet organisation we have now reached a stage where, as Comrade Sverdlov in opening this Congress justly remarked, there is not a corner in Russia, however remote, where Soviet organisation has not firmly established itself and become an integral part of the Soviet constitution, which was based on the long experience gained in the struggle of the toilers and the oppressed.

In place of our utter defencelessness, after the last four years' war, which has left in the masses not only the hatred natural to oppressed people, but also revulsion, terrible fatigue and exhaustion, and which condemned the revolution to a most difficult period, during which we were defenceless against the blows of German and Austrian imperialism—in place of this defenceless-

ness we have now a powerful Red Army. Finally, and most important of all, in place of our international isolation, from which we suffered both at the time of the October Revolution and at the beginning of the present year, we have now reached a position when our only true allies, the toilers and the oppressed of all countries, have at last arisen; when the leaders of the West European proletariat, such as Liebknecht and Adler, who paid with long months of imprisonment for their bold and heroic endeavours to raise their voices against the imperialist war, have been liberated because the workers' revolutions in Vienna and Berlin, which are developing daily and hourly, compelled their liberation.¹ In place of our isolation, we have now reached a position in which we are marching shoulder to shoulder with our international allies. Such are the fundamental achievements of the past year. Permit me briefly to dwell on this path, on this transitional stage.

Comrades, our slogan at first was workers' control. We declared that in spite of the promises of the Kerensky government capital was continuing to sabotage production in the country and was reducing it to a state of ruin. We now realise that disruption was close at hand; and workers' control was therefore the first and essential measure that had to be taken by every not only socialist, but even labour government. We did not decree socialism immediately in all our industries, since socialism can take shape and consolidate itself only when the working class has learnt how to rule, and when the authority of the working class masses has been definitely established. Without that, socialism is but a pious wish. We therefore introduced workers' control, knowing that it was an inconsistent and incomplete measure, that it was necessary for the workers themselves to assume the great task of building up the industry of this vast country without exploiters, and in spite of the exploiters. And, comrades, those who took a direct, or even an indirect, part in this work, those who

¹ Lenin is referring to the Austrian and German revolutions of November 1918, which resulted in the overthrow of the monarchies of those countries and the setting up of republics, in Germany on November 9, and in Austria on November 12, 1918.—*Ed.*

had suffered the oppression and brutality of the old capitalist regime, learned a great deal. We know that very little has yet been achieved; we know that in this extremely backward and impoverished country, where every hindrance and obstacle was put in the way of the working class, a long time is necessary before that class can learn to manage industry. But what in our opinion is most important and most valuable is that the workers have themselves undertaken to manage, and that workers' control, which in all the main branches of industry was bound to be chaotic, disorganised, primitive and incomplete, is now giving place to workers' management of industry on a national scale.

The position of the workers and the trade unions has changed. Their main duty now is to appoint their representatives to all management boards and central bodies and to all the new organisations which have taken over from capitalism a disrupted and deliberately sabotaged industry. They undertook this task without the assistance of those intellectuals who from the very outset deliberately used their knowledge and superior education—the result of the store of science accumulated by mankind—to frustrate the cause of socialism, who used science not to assist the masses in organising a social economic system of the people without exploiters, but to put a spoke in the wheel, in order to hinder the workers, who had taken upon themselves the task of administration although they were least trained for it. We can now say that the main hindrance has been smashed. It was extremely difficult, but the sabotage of all elements who gravitate towards the bourgeoisie has been broken. In spite of tremendous handicaps, the workers have succeeded in effecting this basic step, which has laid the foundation of socialism. We do not exaggerate, nor do we fear to tell the truth. Yes, it is true that from the point of view of the final aim very little has been achieved. But a great deal, a very great deal, has been done to strengthen the foundation. When we speak of socialism we cannot say that the foundation which has been laid in the working class masses is a conscious one, in the sense that they have procured and read books or pamphlets; it is conscious in the sense that they have undertaken the performance of an extremely difficult task by their own energies and with their

own hands. They committed thousands of blunders, and themselves suffered from these blunders. But every blunder tempered and steeled them in the work of organising the administration of industry, which has now been established and placed upon a firm foundation. This task they have accomplished. This work will no longer be conducted as it was heretofore. Now, not merely the leaders and not merely the advanced workers, but the widest strata, the entire mass of workers know that they are building socialism with their own hands, that the foundation has been laid and that there is no force within the country that can prevent them from carrying the work to a successful conclusion.

While great difficulties were encountered in industry, where we had to traverse a path which to many seemed long, but which was actually brief, a path which led from workers' control to workers' management, in the more backward countryside far greater preparatory work had to be performed. Those who have studied rural life and have associated with the peasant masses in the countryside say that the October Revolution of the towns became a real October Revolution in the countryside only in the summer and autumn of 1918. And here, comrades, when the Petrograd proletariat and the soldiers of the Petrograd garrison took over power, they fully realised that constructive work would encounter far greater difficulties in the countryside; that here one must proceed more gradually; that to attempt to establish social cultivation of the land by means of decrees and legislation would be the height of folly; that an insignificant number of enlightened peasants might agree to this, but that the vast majority of the peasants had no such object in view. We therefore confined ourselves to that which was absolutely essential in the interests of the development of the revolution, namely, in no case to endeavour to outrun the development of the masses, but to wait until, as a result of their own experience and their own struggles, a progressive movement grew up. In October we confined ourselves to sweeping away forthwith the ancient enemy of the peasants, the feudal landlord, the latifundist. That was the struggle of the peasantry as a whole. Here the peasantry was not yet divided into proletariat, semi-proletariat, poor peasantry and bourgeoisie. We

Socialists knew that socialism was impossible without that struggle. But we also knew that our knowledge in itself was not enough; that it was essential that that knowledge should reach the millions, and not by means of propaganda, but as a result of the experience gained by the millions themselves. And therefore, since the peasants as a whole could not conceive the revolution on any other basis than that of equal land tenure, we openly declared in our decree of November 8 (October 26), 1917, that we would adopt the peasants' Instructions on the land question as a basis.¹

We frankly declared that these Instructions did not correspond with our views, that this was not communism; but that we did not intend to impose what answered to our programme but did not answer to their views. We declared that we would march with them as with comrades in toil, confident that the progress of the revolution would lead them to the position at which we had arrived ourselves. As a result, we have the peasant movement. The agrarian reform began with the socialisation of the land, which we ourselves helped to carry by our votes while openly declaring that it did not correspond to our views; for, knowing that the vast majority shared the view of equal land tenure, we had no desire to force anything upon them, and preferred to wait until the peasants themselves outlived this view and were ready to advance farther. We waited and were able to mobilise our forces.

The law we then adopted was based on general democratic principles and on that which united the rich kulak muzhik with the poor muzhik, namely, hatred of the landlord. It was based on the general idea of equality, which was undoubtedly a revolutionary idea directed against the old monarchical order. From that law we had to proceed to differentiate the peasants. The law on the socialisation of the land met with general approval. It was adopted unanimously both by us and by those who did not share the views of the Bolsheviks. We left it primarily to the agricultural communes to decide who should possess the land. We left the path open for the development of agriculture along socialist lines, fully realising that agriculture then, in October 1917, was un-

¹ Pp. 405-09 in the present volume.—*Ed.*

able to adopt that path. As a result of our preparatory work, a step of vast, world-historic significance was achieved, without parallel in the most democratic republican states. That step was taken by the masses this summer even in the most remote Russian villages. When matters reached the pass of food difficulties and famine, when, as a result of the old heritage and of the four accursed years of war, owing to counter-revolution and civil war, we were deprived of the richest of our grain regions, when matters reached a state of extremity and the cities were menaced with famine, then the sole faithful and reliable support of our government, the advanced workers of the cities and the industrial regions, began a united movement into the villages. It is a sheer slander to say that the workers set out to provoke armed conflict between the workers and the peasants. Events have refuted that slander. They set out to repulse the exploiting elements of the countryside, the kulaks, who were amassing untold wealth by speculation in grain while the people were dying of hunger. They set out to aid the poor labouring peasants, who constitute the majority of the rural population. That they did not go in vain, that they extended the hand of alliance, that their preparatory work was taken up by the masses—that was fully proved in July, by the July crisis, when kulak revolts flared up throughout Russia. The July crisis ended with the toiling and exploited elements in the countryside rising up everywhere, rising in alliance with the proletariat of the towns. Today Comrade Zinoviev informed me over the telephone that 18,000 people were present at the Pétrograd Regional Congress of the Committees of Poor Peasants, and that a most unusual spirit of enthusiasm and animation prevailed. That which is taking place all over Russia is adopting more definite form, so that when the poor peasants rose, they saw from their own experience what the struggle against the kulaks meant. They realised that in order to keep the cities supplied with food, and in order to re-establish the exchange of goods, without which the village cannot exist, they must not follow the rural bourgeoisie and the kulaks. They saw that they must organise themselves separately.

And we have now taken the first big step towards the socialist revolution in the countryside. In October that was impossible. We grasped the moment when the masses could be approached, and we have now reached a point where the socialist revolution in the countryside has begun, where there is not a village, however remote, where it is not realised that neighbour rich peasant and neighbour kulak, in speculating in grain, are regarding events from the old backwater village point of view.

And only now will the peasant households, the peasant poor, rallying around their leaders, the workers of the cities, provide a stable foundation for real socialist construction. Only now will socialist construction begin in the countryside. Only now are Soviets and farms being formed that are systematically striving for the collective cultivation of the soil on a large scale, for the application of knowledge, science and machinery, which in the old ignorant and reactionary times were unable to create even the most simple and elementary human culture. The work to be performed here is even more difficult than in the case of industry. Even greater mistakes are being here committed by our local committees and Soviets. But they are learning from their mistakes. We are not afraid of mistakes when they are committed by the masses, who regard constructive effort in an enlightened manner, for we rely only on our own experience and on the work of our own hands.

And now the tremendous upheaval that in so short a time has led us to socialism in the countryside is showing that our fight has been crowned with success. The Red Army is the most striking proof of that. You know what situation we were in at the time of the world imperialist war, when the condition of Russia rendered the lot of the masses intolerable. You know that at that time we were in a state of utter helplessness. We frankly told the working class masses the whole truth. We exposed the secret imperialist treaties, the fruits of a policy which serves as a vast instrument of deception, and which now in America, the most advanced of the bourgeois imperialist democratic republics, is deceiving and fooling the masses as never before. When the imperialist character of the war became patent to all, the Russian Soviet republic was

the only country that completely destroyed the secret foreign policy of the bourgeoisie. It exposed the secret treaties and declared, through Comrade Trotsky, to all the countries of the world: We appeal to you to put an end to this war in a democratic way, without annexations and without indemnities, and frankly and proudly declare the truth, a bitter truth, but nevertheless the truth, that in order to end the war a revolution against the bourgeois government is required. But our cry met with no response. And so we had to pay the heavy price of the onerous peace that was forced upon us by the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, a treaty that filled many of our sympathisers with gloom and despair. That was because we were alone. But we were doing our duty: we told you that these were the purposes of the war! The torrent of German imperialism was able to overwhelm us because it required a considerable period of time before our workers and peasants could achieve solid organisation. At that time we had no army; all we had was the old disorganised army of the imperialists, driven to participate in a war for aims which the soldiers did not desire and with which they did not sympathise. It turned out that we had to undergo an extremely painful upheaval. It was a period in which the masses needed to recover from the sufferings of the imperialist war and to realise that a new war was beginning. We shall be entitled to regard as our war a war which will be waged in defence of our socialist revolution. That is what millions and tens of millions of people had to learn from their own experience. It required months. The learning of this lesson was slow and painful. But by the summer of this year it became obvious to all that the lesson had at last been learnt; that a transformation had taken place; that in order that the army, which is the product of the masses of the people, because it is an expression of their weariness and despair, which is sacrificing itself, and which after four years of most sanguinary warfare is again prepared to go to war—that in order that such an army should support the Soviet republic of our country it was necessary that the weariness and despair of the masses preparing to enter the shambles should give place to a clear realisation of the fact that it is indeed their own cause for which they are going to die, the cause of the workers' and peas-

ants' Soviets, the cause of the socialist republic. That has been achieved.

The victories we gained over the Czecho-Slovakians in the summer, and the news now being received of victories, quite considerable victories, prove that a transformation has taken place, and that the most difficult of tasks—the creation, after four years of painful war, of a consciously socialist organisation of the masses—has been achieved. That consciousness has struck deep roots among the masses. Tens of millions of people have realised that they are engaged in a difficult cause. And that is a pledge that we shall not succumb to despair, in spite of the fact that the forces of world imperialism, which at present are stronger than we are, are being mustered against us, in spite of the fact that we are surrounded by the soldiers of the imperialists, who have come to realise the danger of a Soviet power and are burning with a desire to strangle it, and in spite of the fact that we tell the truth and do not conceal that they are stronger than we are.

We declare that we are growing, that the Soviet republic is growing. The cause of the proletarian revolution is growing faster than the imperialist forces are drawing in upon us. We are full of hope and of the certainty that we are waging war in the interests not only of the Russian socialist revolution, but of the world socialist revolution. Our hopes of victory are growing rapidly, because the class consciousness of our workers is growing. What was the state of Soviet organisation in October of last year? Only the first steps were being taken. We were still unable to put it on a proper basis. But now we have a Soviet constitution. The Soviet constitution, ratified in July, is, as we know, not the invention of a commission, it is not the creation of jurists, nor is it copied from other constitutions. The world has never known such a constitution as ours. It embodies the experience of the struggle and organisation of the proletarian masses against the exploiters both of our country and of the whole world. We possess a fund of fighting experience. That fund of experience provided a striking corroboration of the fact that the organised workers created a Soviet government without bureaucrats, without a standing army, and without privileges (privileges in practice designed for the bour-

geoisie), that they waged the struggle on the whole no worse than these, and created the foundations of a new order in the mills and factories. We are entering on this work and are drawing into it new collaborators, who are essential in order to carry the Soviet constitution into effect. We have ready cadres of new recruits, young peasants, who must be drawn into the work, become part of the new cadres and help to carry our cause to completion.

The last question on which I desire to dwell is the international situation. We are standing shoulder to shoulder with our international comrades, and we can now see for ourselves with what decision and energy they are expressing their conviction that the Russian proletarian revolution will march hand in hand with them, the international revolution.

As the international significance of the revolution grew, the imperialists of the whole world concentrated their forces more furiously against us. In October 1917 they regarded our republic as a curiosity not worthy of serious attention. In February they looked upon it as an experiment in socialism not to be taken seriously. But the army of the republic grew and gained in strength. The most difficult task was accomplished—the creation of a socialist Red Army. As our cause gained in strength, and as its successes multiplied, the opposition and the hatred of the imperialists of all countries grew more rabid and have now reached such a pitch that the British and French capitalists, who proclaimed that they were the enemies of Wilhelm, are on the verge of uniting with this same Wilhelm for the purpose of strangling the socialist Soviet republic. For they have come to realise that it is no longer a curiosity, or an experiment in socialism, but the genuine home of the world socialist revolution. Hence, with the growing success of our revolution the number of our enemies also increased. We must realise what is facing us, without in any way concealing the seriousness of our situation. And we are prepared to meet it. We are no longer alone: with us are the workers of Vienna and Berlin, who are rising to fight the same fight, and who perhaps will bring to our common cause a higher degree of discipline and class consciousness.

Comrades, in order that you may realise how the clouds are

gathering around our Soviet republic and what dangers are threatening us, permit me to read you the text of a note addressed to us by the German government through its consulate.¹

Comrades, we know perfectly well that the German government was fully aware of the fact that from the very beginning of the war the Russian embassy had enjoyed the hospitality of the German Socialists, and that no supporters of German imperialism ever crossed the threshold of the Russian embassy. The friends of the Russian embassy were those Socialists who were opposed to the war and who sympathised with Karl Liebknecht. They were its guests from the very inception of the embassy; with them alone did we have any intercourse. The German government was perfectly aware of that. It followed the movements of the representatives of our government as zealously as the government of Nicholas II used to follow the movements of our comrades. The German government is now making this gesture not because the situation has in any way changed, but because it formerly felt itself stronger, and was not afraid that one burning house on the streets of Berlin would start a conflagration throughout Germany. The German government has lost its head, and now that the whole of Germany is ablaze it thinks it can put out the fire by turning its police hose on one single house.

That is simply ridiculous. If the German government is going to break off diplomatic relations, we shall say that we knew that it would do it, that it was making every effort to achieve an alliance with the British and French imperialists. We know that Wilson's government sent telegram after telegram requesting that the

¹ Here Lenin read a note dated November 5, 1918, received from Wilhelm's government, which was then living its last days. The note declared that the German government was recalling its diplomatic representatives from the Soviet republic and demanded that the Soviet representatives should likewise be recalled from Germany. This severance of diplomatic relations was justified by the pretext that the Soviet government allegedly 1) was using its embassy for the purpose of spreading revolutionary appeals in Germany, and 2) was concealing and allowing to escape with impunity the murderers of Count Mirbach, the German Ambassador, who had been assassinated in Moscow in July 1918 by Left Socialist-Revolutionaries. The text of the note is omitted here. Those who are interested will find it quoted in the *Collected Works of Lenin*, Vol. XXIII.—*Ed.*

German armies should not be withdrawn from Poland, the Ukraine, Esthonia and Livonia; for, although it is an enemy of German imperialism, these armies are doing its work: they are crushing the Bolsheviks. Let them be withdrawn only when the pro-Entente armies of liberation appear on the scene to strangle the Bolsheviks.

We are perfectly aware of that; there is nothing unexpected for us from this quarter. All that we said was that now, when Germany is in flames, and when Austria is burning, when they have been obliged to liberate Liebknecht and allow him to visit the Russian embassy, as was decided by a general meeting of Socialists headed by Liebknecht—such a step on the part of the German government shows not so much that they want to fight as that they have completely lost their heads, that they are at a loss as to what decision they should take; for a terrible foe is advancing upon them—Anglo-American imperialism, which has crushed Austria with a peace that is a hundred times more coercive than the Peace of Brest-Litovsk. Germany sees that these liberators want to crush, torture and strangle her too. But at the same time working class Germany is rising. The German army proved to be useless, unfit to fight, not because discipline was weak, but because the soldiers who refused to fight were transferred from the Eastern front to the German Western front and carried with them what the bourgeoisie calls world Bolshevism.

That is why the German army proved unfit to fight; and this document is the best proof of their utter confusion. We say that it will lead to a diplomatic rupture, and that perhaps it might have led to war, were they strong enough to lead the White Guard armies. We have therefore sent a telegram to all the Soviets, which concludes by calling upon them to be on their guard, to hold themselves in readiness, to muster all their forces, for this is a manifestation of the fact that the chief aim of international imperialism is to overthrow Bolshevism. That would not only mean the defeat of Russia; it would mean the defeat of the workers in every-country. But they will not succeed, no matter what brutalities and outrages may follow this decision. They, these wild beasts, are preparing to attack Russia from the South, through the Dar-

danelles, or by way of Bulgaria or Rumania. They are negotiating for the formation of a White Army in Germany to be thrown against Russia. We are fully aware of this danger, and publicly declare: Comrades, not in vain have we laboured a whole year; we have laid the foundation; we are approaching decisive battles, battles which will indeed be decisive. But we are not alone: the proletariat of Western Europe has risen; it has not left a stone standing in Austria-Hungary. The government of that country is as helpless, as utterly confused, has lost its head as completely as the government of Nicholas Romanov at the end of February 1917. Our cry must be: Again and again must every effort be bent, remembering that we are approaching the last decisive fight, not for the Russian revolution alone, but for the world socialist revolution!

We know that the wild beasts of imperialism are still stronger than we are. They can still inflict wholesale outrage, brutalities and atrocities upon our country. But they cannot defeat the world revolution. They are filled with savage hatred. And we therefore say: Come what may, every Russian worker and peasant will do his duty and will face death if the interests of the revolution demand it. We say: Come what may, no matter what miseries the imperialists may still inflict upon us, it will not save them. Imperialism will perish and the world socialist revolution will triumph in spite of all!

THE FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

THE fourth anniversary of November 7 (October 25) is approaching. The farther that great day recedes into the past, the clearer stands out the significance of the proletarian revolution in Russia, and the more deeply are we led to reflect upon the practical experience gained in our work as a whole.

In a very brief and, of course, far from complete and precise form this significance and experience may be outlined as follows.

The immediate and direct aim of the revolution in Russia was a bourgeois-democratic aim, namely, to destroy the relics of mediaevalism and abolish them completely; to purge Russia of that barbarity and shame, of that tremendous hindrance to all culture and progress in our country.

And we can pride ourselves on having effected that purge much more vigorously, much more rapidly, boldly and successfully, and, from the point of view of its effect on the broad masses of the population, much more extensively and profoundly, than was the case in the great French Revolution 125 years ago.

The anarchists and the petty-bourgeois democrats (*i.e.*, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, who are the Russian representatives of that international social type) talked, and still talk, an incredible amount of nonsense regarding the relation between the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the socialist (*i.e.*, proletarian) revolution. The last four years have completely confirmed the correctness of our understanding of Marxism on this point and of our estimate of the experience of former revolutions. We brought the bourgeois-democratic revolution to *completion* as nobody has done before. We are progressing towards the socialist

revolution, consciously, deliberately and undeviatingly, knowing that no Chinese Wall separates it from the bourgeois-democratic revolution, and knowing too that *struggle alone* will determine (in the long run) how far we shall progress, what portion of this immeasurably great task we shall accomplish, and to what extent we shall succeed in consolidating our victories. Time will show. But we see even now that a tremendous amount (tremendous for this disorganised, exhausted and backward country) has already been done towards the socialist transformation of society.

Let us, however, finish what we have to say regarding the bourgeois-democratic content of our revolution. Marxists should understand what that means. In order to explain, let us take a few graphic examples.

The bourgeois-democratic content of the revolution means purging the social relations (systems and institutions) of the country of mediaevalism, serfdom, feudalism.

What were the chief manifestations, the chief survivals and remnants of feudalism in Russia in 1917? The monarchy, the social orders, landownership and land tenure, the position of women, religion, and the oppression of the nationalities. Take any one of these Augean stables, which, incidentally, were to a considerable extent left uncleansed by all the more advanced states when they accomplished their bourgeois-democratic revolutions 125, 250 and more years ago (1649 in England); take any of these Augean stables, and you will see that we have purged them thoroughly. In a matter of ten weeks, from November 7 (October 25), 1917, to the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly on January 18 (5), 1918, we did a thousand times more in this respect than was done by the bourgeois democrats and liberals (the Cadets) and by the petty-bourgeois democrats (the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries) *during the eight months* they were in power.

Those poltroons, chatterboxes, vainglorious Narcissuses and petty Hamlets flourished their pasteboard swords—but did not even destroy the monarchy. We cleaned out all that monarchist garbage as nobody had ever done before. We left not a stone standing of that ancient edifice, the social orders (even the most advanced countries, such as England, France and Germany, have

not completely rid themselves of survivals of the social orders). The most profound roots of the system of social orders, namely, the remnants of feudalism and serfdom in landownership, we have completely eradicated. One may argue (there are enough quill-drivers, Cadets, Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries abroad to indulge in such arguments) as to what "in the long run" will be the outcome of the agrarian transformation effected by the October Revolution. We have no desire at present to waste time on such disputes, for we are deciding this dispute, as well as the whole mass of controversies connected with it, in a fighting fashion. But one cannot dispute the fact that the petty-bourgeois democrats attempted for eight months to "compromise" with the landlords, the guardians of the traditions of serfdom, while we in a few weeks completely wiped the landlords off the face of the Russian soil, together with all their traditions.

Take religion, or the denial of rights to women, or the oppression and inequality of the non-Russian nationalities. These are all problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Those nincompoop petty-bourgeois democrats gabbled about them for eight months. There is not a *single* country in the world, even the most advanced, where *these* questions have been completely settled in a *bourgeois-democratic way*. In our country they have been settled completely by the legislation of the October Revolution. We fought, and are fighting, religion seriously. We have given *all* the non-Russian nationalities their own republics or autonomous regions. There is no longer in our country such baseness, meanness and infamy as the denial of rights to or the inequality of rights of women, that disgusting survival of feudalism and mediaevalism, which is being refurbished by the avaricious bourgeoisie and the dullwitted and frightened petty bourgeoisie in every country of the globe without exception.

All this makes up the content of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The leaders of that revolution (or of those revolutions, if we consider each national variety of the one general type) 150 and 250 years ago promised to rid mankind of mediaeval privileges, the inequality of women, privileged state religions (or the "idea of religion," or "religiousness" in general) and the unequal-

ity of nationalities. They promised, but did not fulfil their promises. They could not fulfil them, for they were hindered by "respect" for the "sacredness of private property." Our proletarian revolution had not that accursed "respect" for this thrice-accursed mediaevalism and for the "sacredness of private property."

But in order to render the achievements of the bourgeois-democratic revolution lasting for the peoples of Russia, we were obliged to go farther; and we did go farther. We solved the problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in passing, as a "by-product" of the main and real *proletarian*-revolutionary socialist work. We always said that reforms are a by-product of the revolutionary class struggle. We said—and proved by deeds—that bourgeois-democratic reforms are a by-product of the proletarian, i.e., of the socialist, revolution. It should be stated that the Kautskys, Hilferdings, Martovs, Chernovs, Hillquits, Longuets, MacDonalds, Turatis, and the other heroes of "Two-and-a-Half" Marxism, were incapable of understanding this relation between the bourgeois-democratic and the proletarian-socialist revolutions. The first grows into the second. The second, in passing, solves the problems of the first. The second consolidates the work of the first. Struggle, and struggle alone, decides how far the second shall succeed in outgrowing the first.

The Soviet system is indeed one of the most graphic corroborations, or manifestations, of this growing of the one revolution into the other. The Soviet system represents the maximum of democracy for the workers and peasants and, at the same time, it implies a break with *bourgeois* democracy and the rise of a *new type* of democracy of world-historic importance, viz., proletarian democracy, or the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Let the dogs and swine of the moribund bourgeoisie, and of the petty-bourgeois democracy who follow in their wake, heap imprecations, abuse and derision upon our heads for the failures and errors committed in the building up of *our* Soviet system. We do not forget for a moment that we have indeed committed, and are committing, numerous errors and failures. Indeed, it is impossible to avoid failures and errors in a cause so new in the history of the world as the creation of a hitherto unwitnessed type of state

structure. We shall undeviatingly strive to correct our failures and errors and to improve the application of Soviet principles in practice, which is still very far from perfect. But we are entitled to be proud, and are proud, of the fact that it has been our good fortune to *begin* the building of a Soviet state, and to *begin* thereby a new epoch in world history, the epoch of the domination of a *new* class, a class which is oppressed in every capitalist country and which is everywhere marching forward towards a new life, towards victory over the bourgeoisie, towards the dictatorship of the proletariat—and towards the emancipation of mankind from the yoke of capital and from imperialist wars.

The question of imperialist wars, of the international policy of finance capital which dominates the whole world, a policy that *inevitably* results in new imperialist wars, that inevitably results in an extreme intensification of national oppression, pillage, brigandry and the throttling of weak, backward and small nationalities by a handful of "advanced" powers—this question has become since 1914 the keystone of the entire policy of all countries of the globe. It is a question of life and death for millions of people. It is a question of whether 20,000,000 people (as compared with the 10,000,000 who were killed in the war of 1914-18 and in the supplementary "petty wars" that are still going on) are to be slaughtered in the next imperialist war, which the bourgeoisie is preparing, which is growing out of capitalism before our very eyes; it is a question of whether in that future war, which is inevitable (if capitalism remains), 60,000,000 people are to be maimed (as compared with the 30,000,000 maimed in the years 1914-18). And in connection with this question too our October Revolution opened a new era in world history: The menials of the bourgeoisie and its chorus, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, and the petty-bourgeois, allegedly "Socialist," democrats all over the world, derided our slogan of "turning the imperialist war into civil war." But that slogan proved to be the *truth*, the only truth—an unpleasant, blunt, naked and brutal truth, but the truth, as against the host of most refined jingo and pacifist deceptions. Those deceptions are collapsing. The Peace of Brest-Litovsk has been exposed. And every day exposes with increasing

ruthlessness the significance and consequences of a peace even worse than that of Brest-Litovsk—the Peace of Versailles. And to the millions who are reflecting on the causes of the recent war and of the approaching future war the grim truth grows ever more clear, distinct and inexorable that it is impossible to escape imperialist war and imperialist peace (if the old orthography were still in use, I would have written both words *mir*,¹ with both their meanings) which inevitably gives rise to imperialist war, it is impossible to escape that inferno, *except by a Bolshevik struggle and a Bolshevik revolution.*

Let bourgeoisie and pacifists, generals and burghers, capitalists and philistines, faithful christians and the knights of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals abuse that revolution in their fury. Their torrent of rage, calumnies and lies cannot conceal the world-historic fact that, for the first time in hundreds and thousands of years, the slaves have replied to a war among the slaveowners by openly proclaiming the slogan "Let us turn this war, waged by the slaveowners for the division of their plunder, into a war of the slaves of all nations against the slaveowners of all nations."

For the first time in thousands of years that slogan has been transformed from a vague and impotent expectation into a clear and definite political programme, into an active struggle on the part of millions of oppressed people led by the proletariat; it has been transformed into the first victory of the proletariat, the first victory in the cause of abolishing wars and of uniting the workers of all countries against the union of the bourgeoisie of all countries, the bourgeoisie that makes peace and war at the expense of the slaves of capital, the wage workers, the peasants, the toilers.

This first victory *is not yet the final victory.* It was achieved by our October Revolution at the cost of incredible difficulties and hardships, at the cost of unprecedented suffering, accompanied by numerous serious failures and errors on our part. And, indeed, how could one expect a single backward people to frustrate the

¹ A play on the Russian word *mir*, which has two meanings: *world* and *peace*, the spelling of which was distinguished in the old orthography, but is identical in the new.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

imperialist wars of the most powerful and most developed countries of the world without suffering failures and without committing mistakes? We are not afraid to confess our mistakes and shall examine them soberly, in order that we may learn to correct them. But the fact remains that for the first time in thousands of years the promise to "reply" to war between the slaveowners by a revolution of the slaves directed *against* all and every kind of slaveowner *has been completely fulfilled*—and is being fulfilled despite all difficulties.

We started the cause. When, at what date and time, the proletarians of which nation will carry that cause to completion is not the essential thing. The essential thing is that the ice has been broken, the road is open and the path blazed.

Messieurs the capitalists of all countries, keep up your hypocrisy of "national defence"—the Japanese against the American, the American against the Japanese, the French against the British, and so forth! Messieurs the knights of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals and the pacifist burghers and philistines of the entire world, go on evading the question of how to combat imperialist wars by issuing new "Basle Manifestoes" (on the model of the Basle Manifesto of 1912). *The first Bolshevik revolution has wrested the first hundred million people of this earth from imperialist war and from imperialist peace. Subsequent revolutions will wrest the whole of humanity from such wars and from such peace.*

Our last—but, most important, most difficult, and still most uncompleted—task is economic construction, the laying of an economic foundation for the new, the socialist, edifice, the replacement of the feudal edifice which has been destroyed and the capitalist edifice which has been half destroyed. In this important and most difficult of tasks we have suffered most failures and committed most errors. And how could one expect a task so new to the world to be begun without failures and without mistakes? But we have begun it. We are continuing it. By our "New Economic Policy" we are just now engaged in correcting a number of our mistakes. We are learning how to continue the building of a socialist edifice in a petty-peasant country without committing such mistakes.

The difficulties are immense. But we are accustomed to grappling with immense difficulties. Not for nothing have our enemies nicknamed us "hard flints" and exponents of a "bone-breaking policy." But we have also, at least to some extent, another art essential in revolution, namely, flexibility, the ability to effect swift and sudden changes of tactics if changes in objective conditions demand it, and to choose another path for the accomplishment of our aim if the former path proves to be inexpedient or impracticable at the given moment.

Borne on a wave of enthusiasm, having awakened first the political enthusiasm and then the military enthusiasm of the people, we calculated, with the help of this enthusiasm, to achieve directly economic tasks as great as the political and military tasks. We calculated—or perhaps it would be truer to say that we presumed, without sufficient calculation—to organise the state production and the state distribution of products on communist lines in a petty-peasant country by direct orders of the proletarian state. Experience has demonstrated our mistake. A number of transitional stages proved necessary: state capitalism and socialism, so as to prepare, by many years of work, for the transition to communism. Not directly relying on enthusiasm, but, aided by the enthusiasm born of the great revolution, and on the basis of personal interest, personal benefit, and business principles, you must set to work in this petty-peasant country to build solid little bridges leading to socialism by way of state capitalism. Otherwise you will never get to communism, you will never bring these scores of millions of people to communism. That is what experience has taught us. That is what the actual development of the revolution has taught us.

And we, who during these three or four years have learnt to make abrupt changes of front (when abrupt changes of front are needed), have begun, zealously, attentively and sedulously (although still not zealously, attentively and sedulously enough) to learn to make a new change of front, the "New Economic Policy." The proletarian state must become a cautious, assiduous and shrewd "business man," a punctilious *wholesale merchant*—otherwise it will never succeed in putting this petty-peasant country

economically on its feet. Under existing conditions, living as we are side by side with the capitalist (for the time being capitalist) West, there can be no other way of transition to communism. A wholesale merchant would appear to be an economic type as remote from communism as heaven is from the earth. But that is one of the contradictions which in the actual conditions of life lead from a petty-peasant economy, by way of state capitalism, to socialism. Personal interest will develop production: and we must first develop production at all costs. Wholesale trade economically unites the millions of small peasants; it gives them a personal interest, binds them together and leads them on to the next step, namely, to various forms of association and union in production itself. We have already set about the necessary reconstruction of our economic policy. We can already count certain successes in this sphere, small and partial, it is true, but undoubtedly successes. We are already, in the field of this new science, finishing our preparatory class. By persistent and assiduous study, by subjecting every step to the test of practical experience, by not fearing to alter over and over again what has been already begun, to correct our mistakes and most carefully analyse their significance, we shall pass into the higher classes. We shall go through "the whole course," although the circumstances of world economics and world politics have rendered that course much longer and much more difficult than we should have liked. No matter what the cost, no matter how severe the sufferings of the transition period may be—despite disaster, famine and disruption, we shall not lose heart, and shall carry our cause to a triumphant conclusion.

October 14, 1921.

OUR REVOLUTION

A propos of the Notes of N. Sukhanov

I

I HAVE lately been glancing through Sukhanov's *Notes on the Revolution*. What strikes me particularly is the pedantry of all our petty-bourgeois democrats, as of all the heroes of the Second International. Apart from the fact that they are extraordinarily faint-hearted, that when it comes to the minutest deviation from the German model even the best of them fortify themselves with reservations—apart from this characteristic which is common to all petty-bourgeois democrats and was abundantly manifested throughout the course of the revolution, what strikes one is their slavish imitation of the past.

They all call themselves Marxists, but their conception of Marxism is impossibly pedantic. They have completely failed to understand the decisive feature of Marxism, namely, its revolutionary dialectics. They have not understood even the direct statements of Marx to the effect that in times of revolution the utmost flexibility is demanded. For instance, they have not understood, and have even failed to notice, the statement made by Marx in one of his letters—I think it was in 1856—expressing the hope of a union in Germany of a peasant war, which might create a revolutionary situation, with the working class movement—even that direct indication they avoid, prowling around it like a cat around a dish of hot porridge.

Their whole conduct betrays them as timorous reformists, fearful of making the slightest move away from the bourgeoisie, let alone breaking with it, and at the same time masking their cowardice by the most reckless rhetoric and braggadocio. But even from the purely theoretical point of view, what strikes me in the case of

all of them is their utter failure to grasp the following Marxist consideration: so far they have observed a definite path of development of capitalism and bourgeois democracy in Western Europe; but what they are completely unable to grasp is that that path can be taken as a model *mutatis mutandis*, only with certain corrections (entirely insignificant corrections from the point of view of world history).

Firstly—the case of a revolution connected with the first imperialist World War. Such a revolution was bound to reveal new features or variations resulting from the war itself. For the world had never seen such a war, and under such circumstances. We find that to this very day the bourgeoisie of the wealthiest countries have been unable since the war to re-establish “normal” bourgeois relations. Yet our reformists, petty bourgeois who pretend to be revolutionaries, considered, and still consider, normal bourgeois relations to be the limit (which cannot be overstepped). And even their conception of “normal” is utterly commonplace and narrow.

Secondly, they are complete strangers to the thought that, while the development of world history as a whole follows general laws, that does not preclude, but, on the contrary, presumes, that certain periods of development may display peculiarities either in form or in order of development. For instance, it does not even occur to them that Russia stands on the borderline between civilised countries and countries which were for the first time brought definitely into the orbit of civilisation by this war, that is, all the Oriental, non-European countries; and that therefore Russia might and was indeed bound to reveal certain peculiarities, which, while of course following the general line of world development, distinguish her revolution from all previous revolutions in West European countries, and which introduce certain partly novel features in the passage to the countries of the East.

Infinitely commonplace, for instance, is the argument they learned by rote during the development of West European Social-Democracy, namely, that we are not yet ripe for socialism, that, as certain of their “learned” men express it, the objective economic premises for socialism do not exist in our country. It does not enter any of their heads to ask: But what about a people which

finds itself in a revolutionary situation, such as that created during the first imperialist war; influenced by the hopelessness of its position, might it not fling itself into a struggle that offered it even a chance of securing conditions for the further development of its civilisation, even if those conditions were not quite the usual ones?

"Russia has not attained the level of development of productive forces that makes socialism possible." The heroes of the Second International, including, of course, Sukhanov, are as proud of this proposition as a chicken that has laid an egg. They keep repeating this incontrovertible proposition over and over again in a thousand different keys, for it seems to them the essential consideration in determining the character of our revolution.

But what if the peculiar situation drew Russia into the world imperialist war, in which every in any way influential West European country was involved; what if the peculiar situation placed her development in close proximity to the revolutions that were beginning, and had partially already begun, in the East; what if the peculiar situation enabled us to achieve the alliance of a "peasant war" with the working class movement, which no less a Marxist than Marx himself wrote of in 1856, in reference to Prussia, as one of the possible prospects?

What if the complete hopelessness of the situation, by intensifying tenfold the energies of the workers and peasants, offered us the possibility of proceeding to create the fundamental requisites of civilisation in a way different from that of the West European countries? Has that changed the general line of development of world history? Has that changed the fundamental relations between the basic classes of every state that is being drawn, or has been drawn, into the general course of world history?

If a definite level of culture is required for the creation of socialism (although nobody can tell what that definite level of culture is), why cannot we begin by achieving the prerequisites for that definite level of culture in a revolutionary way, and then, with the help of a workers' and peasants' government and a Soviet system, proceed to overtake the other nations?

II

You say that civilisation is necessary for the creation of socialism. Very good. But why could we not have begun by creating such prerequisites of civilisation in our country as the expulsion of the landlords and the expulsion of the Russian capitalists, and then start moving towards socialism? Where, in what books, have you read that such variations of the customary historical order of events are impermissible or impossible?

Napoleon, one recalls, wrote: *On s'engage et puis on voit*. Rendered freely that means: One must first start a serious engagement and then see what happens. Well, we first started a serious engagement in November (October) 1917, and then we saw such details of development (from the point of view of world history they are certainly details) as the Brest-Litovsk Peace, the New Economic Policy, and so on. And now there can be no doubt that in the main we have been victorious.

It never occurs to our Sukhanovs, not to speak of the Social-Democrats who are still more Right, that otherwise revolutions could not be made at all. It never occurs to our European philistines that subsequent revolutions in Eastern countries, which possess vastly more numerous populations, and are distinguished by a vastly greater diversity of social conditions, will undoubtedly display even greater peculiarities than the Russian revolution.

It need hardly be said that a textbook written on Kautskian lines was a useful thing in its day. But it is really time to abandon the idea that this textbook foresaw all the forms of development of subsequent world history. It is time to declare that those who think so are simply fools.

January 16-17, 1923